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(800) 662-8835
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Editor
Michael E.C. Gery, (800/662-8835 ext. 3062)

Senior Associate Editor
Renee C. Gannon, CCC (800/662-8835 ext. 3209)

Contributing Editor
Karen Olson House, (800/662-8835 ext. 3036)

Editorial Intern
Ashley Harrington-Andrews

Creative Director
Tara Verna, (800/662-8835 ext. 3134)

Senior Graphic Designer
Warren Kessler, (800/662-8835 ext. 3090)

Business Coordinator
Jenny Lloyd, (800/662-8835 ext. 3091)

Advertising
Jennifer Boedart Hoey, (800/662-8835 ext. 3077)
Todd Boersma, (919/293-0199)

Executive Vice President & CEO
Rick Thomas

Senior Vice President, Corporate Relations
Nelle Hotchkiss

North Carolina's electric cooperatives provide reliable, safe and affordable electric service to 850,000 homes, farms and businesses in North Carolina. The 27 electric cooperatives are each member-owned, not-for-profit and overseen by a board of directors elected by the membership.

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Carolina Country magazine is available monthly to members of North Carolina's electric cooperatives. If you are a member of one of these cooperatives but do not receive Carolina Country, you may request a subscription by calling Member Services at the office of your cooperative. If your address has changed, please inform your cooperative.



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Home Builders Blitz helps put up energy-efficient housing for a Habitat for Humanity project in Wake County. Learn about a similar project in the EnergyUnited cooperative's service area on page 16. (Photo by Steffan Hacker, Habitat for Humanity International)



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Carolina Country confessions

By Michael E.C. Gery, Editor



In your hand right now is the award-winning Carolina Country magazine. This spring, Carolina Country received the George W. Haggard Memorial Journalism Award, given by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Of 19 statewide publications such as ours, the judges considered what we published in 2006 to be “the most lucid, forthright and effective presentation of ideas advancing the objectives of electric cooperatives and the issues that affect them and their consumer-owners.”

In case you're wondering just how we got to be so good—and what it costs you—I'm going to tell you.

The very first thing we do each month is to think about you. Like any good form of communication, Carolina Country first considers who we're trying to reach. How do we do that? We listen to you. We pay attention when you call us, write to us and when we meet you where you live and work. Not a day goes by when we aren't in touch with you one way or another. We also conduct surveys from time to time to ask you direct questions about the magazine. And we listen to the staffs at the electric cooperatives who serve you every day. The idea is to publish a magazine that not only contains something interesting across the cooperative membership statewide, but also reflects a collective personality, a human touch that you can relate to like a friend or neighbor.

Then we think about what might interest you that month. We follow what's happening in the electric utility industry and among cooperatives, and we listen to specialists here at the Raleigh office and at the cooperative offices. To meet our standards, the articles, consumer guides and graphics we select or assign must say something as simply and accurately as possible. We figure not many of you look forward to reading something that bears no relevance to your daily lives. This month, for example, we're publishing information on energy-efficient home improvements and North Carolina's progress in encouraging renewable energy development, plus a quiz testing your electrical safety knowledge.

We also try to find something that's down-home country: seasonal pictures, nostalgia for how life used to be and still could be, something kind and generous that your neighbors do for someone else, recipes you might try for supper, home-grown products and services that might help you.

More than most magazines, we include your stories, pictures, ideas and advice. As cooperatives, we know that we work best when members are working with us. We work for you, after all. We like to take what you give us and spread it

among everyone else. This month we're publishing some of your energy-saving ideas—serious ones as well as light-hearted and friendly ones. You also supply us with endless ways to tell that “you know you're in Carolina country.”


Because of today's publishing, printing and mailing technology we can include in each magazine sections intended solely for your cooperative. We publish 24 different versions of Carolina Country each month. Cooperatives place their own pages in the magazine so that information affecting, say, Rutherford EMC members goes directly to them. The press that prints Carolina Country—it's the size of two tractor-trailers and located in Wisconsin,

where we get the best overall service—can set up four custom pages for Rutherford EMC in less than two minutes. This month, for example, Halifax EMC members see a mail-in election ballot inside their magazine. Members of Tideland EMC, Cape Hatteras Electric and EnergyUnited this month see their co-op's annual report in their magazine. Randolph EMC last month sent members a refrigerator magnet attached to the cover of their magazine.

What does all this cost you? Less than 31 cents per magazine. That's less than \$3.72 per year, if you're a member of a North Carolina electric cooperative. That's quite a deal. (Maybe you should give us a pay

raise.) Check your local magazine rack and see if there's anything for 31 cents. Paid advertising helps carry the load—about 40 percent—and advertisers are happy to pay it because they know that you look at the magazine. Our surveys say more than 76 percent of you read every issue.

The last time Carolina Country won the national Haggard Award was for our 1993 editions. That was a time, I remember, when we worked into the night each month measuring photo prints with a ruler, printing out typeset galleys, waxing the back of them, pasting them onto stiff paper boards, rolling the boards with a hand-roller, carrying the boards down to the bus station in an oversized suitcase, shipping them to a printer, and praying they'd get the thing printed and mailed on time. We mailed about 342,000 magazines back then. Today we send to our Wisconsin printer over the Internet some 150 pages as electronic files in about 15 minutes. About two weeks later, more than 575,000 magazines are in mailboxes throughout North Carolina.

We would not be able to do all this without the continuing support and encouragement from you, the staff members at the cooperatives, and senior management here in Raleigh. Thanks for all your help. 



The award winning Carolina Country staff. Front (from left): Michael Gery, Jenny Lloyd, Jennifer Boedart Hoey. Back (from left): Renee Gannon, Warren Kessler, Tara Verna, Karen House.

Your cooperative takes safety demonstrations on the road



To Carteret-Craven Electric,
Thank you, Mr. Bill Ward, for bringing your safety demonstration to Arthur W. Edwards Elementary School. My favorite was static electricity. I would appreciate if you would visit us again in the near future.

Erin Schulte / Havelock



David Neems at work.

To Piedmont EMC,
As a teacher, I daily try to ignite sparks in my students' imagination. At the beginning of the year, I announced all our units of study and the dates they would be taught. Afterward, a shy and quiet parent approached me and said he was a lineman for Piedmont Electric and he would like to talk to my class.

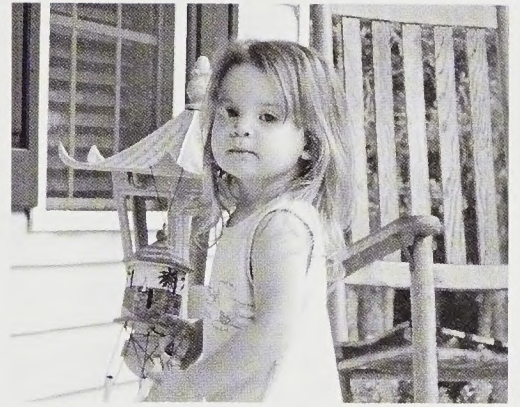
On Feb. 23, Donald Neems walked into my classroom. (I later found out he had little sleep after being on call on a very windy night.) He brought a huge demonstration cart and boxes of surprises and all of his equipment. From the moment he walked in, my students were in awe. His daughter's smile may have been the brightest, but even my tough 4th grade boys were grinning.

He talked about electricity in a language they could understand. He brought a very informative video that showed images of electricity and linemen. He answered questions, showed his equipment (letting the kids try it on), and continuously stressed safety. As he went through the safety demonstration using the house, truck and doll, there was not a sound in my classroom as every eye remained on him. At the end of his presentation, he asked each child to guess the weight of his tool belt as it passed from child to child. The winner received a Piedmont EMC truck, and each child was presented with a ruler and pencil. He even surprised the teachers with bags and mugs.

He ended with, "If you've ever thought about being a lineman, I want you to know it's the best job in the world." Don't be surprised if 10 years from now, you have an applicant in your office that remembers this presentation. Don't be surprised if the spark he started carries over into your future employees—both male and female.

*Yvonne Wahlers / Hillsborough
Cameron Park Elementary School*

Lydia in spring



This is my niece Lydia on an early spring morning at my house. She loves the outdoors. There is nothing finer than to live in Carolina, for sure!

*Tammy Sims / Peachland
Pee Dee EMC*

A visitor



I took this picture of my grandson, Blake Horne, with a baby fawn that wandered into my yard. This little fawn was so tame and sweet, and all my grandchildren loved her. We took lots of pictures, but this one with 4-year old Blake, turned out exceptionally well. A neighbor who had been tending to the fawn eventually came to get her, but we enjoyed her company while it lasted.

*Mae Murdock / Hays
Surry-Yadkin EMC*

Contact us

Web site: www.carolinacountry.com
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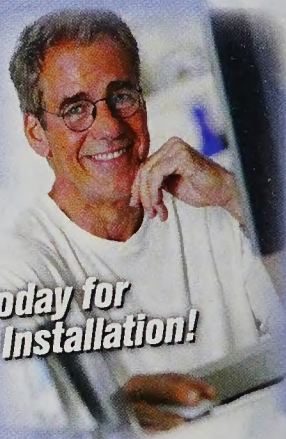
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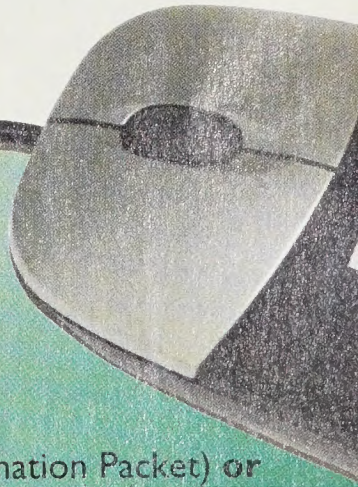
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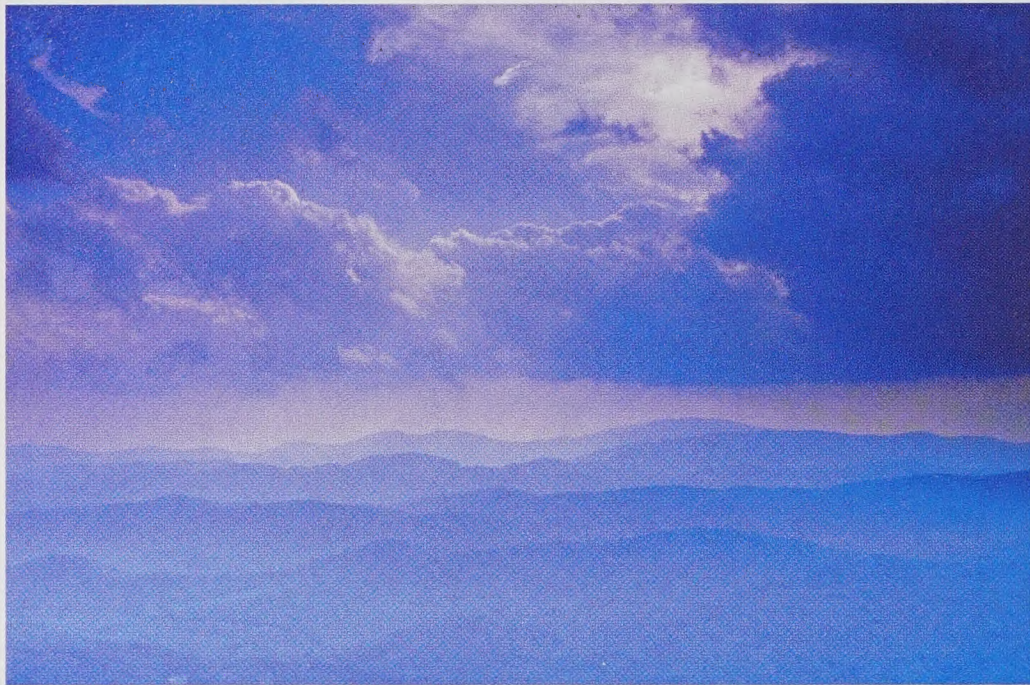
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Renewable Energy Options for North Carolina

As the state considers new energy policy, electric cooperatives protect consumer interests, renewable resource development and efficiency

By Kristie Aldridge



The North Carolina General Assembly is crafting major legislation that will mandate the use of renewable energy resources. These resources are divided into two broad areas: 1) energy efficiency and demand side management programs (managing energy consumption to optimize generation resources), 2) generation of renewable energy, including wind, solar and biomass power. A major study recently requested by the North Carolina Utilities Commission (NCUC) outlined the potential benefits of developing renewable energy resources in North Carolina, along with the possible costs to consumers.

The NCUC report was prepared by an independent, Boston-based consulting firm, La Capra Associates, which has advised other states on energy alternatives. The study examined the types of renewable energy available in North Carolina, the costs associated with these resources and the potential of legislatively mandating a Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) in the fuel mix of the state's electric utilities. The total costs of generation from renewable energy resources, especially in the Southeast, are generally more expensive on a per kilowatt-hour basis than traditional coal and nuclear powered generation.

An RPS would require that a percentage of electric utilities' energy come from renewable energy resources, and the N.C. General Assembly is considering several bills on the issue. The study outlines challenges the utility industry and the state would face when including those resources in a mixed-energy portfolio.

The study identified the following renewable resources available in the state: biomass, wind, wood waste, agriculture crop waste, hydropower and landfill gas. The study acknowledged solar energy but did not include in the above mix.

Although the list of renewable energy resources in North Carolina is relatively broad, the practical application of these resources is limited. Just because a renewable fuel is available doesn't mean the energy can easily be captured and placed on the transmission grid. Some fuels are cost-prohibitive and others are not politically feasible. For example, the study suggests that North Carolina could produce 1,500 megawatts (mw) of wind power, nearly double the output of Progress Energy's Harris nuclear plant, which serves 550,000 homes. However, proposed wind power projects in the state have historically faced strong local and legal opposition.

Wind power challenges

A N.C. statute referred to as "the Ridge Law" limits building heights to 40 feet on mountain ridges at or above 3,000 feet in elevation. Wind generators required to produce wind energy exceed that height, and legal challenges rendering them illegal have been successful. Still, wind generator farms in the mountains and at the coast have the most potential for renewable energy in the state. Utilities and their consumers, however, will have to pay the costs associated with building power lines to wind generators at these locations in order to transport energy where it needs to go. In order to maximize the state's renewable energy potential and achieve a 10 percent mandated renewable energy goal as referenced in the La Capra Study, dozens of wind generator farms would need to be built in the mountains or in high-wind coastal areas. Because of current political conditions, this prospect is very much in doubt.

Biomass potential

Cooperative consumers in rural areas could benefit from renewable energy generated by animal waste, often called biomass. Biomass resources such as poultry litter and hog waste have the potential to produce as much as 200 mw of energy, according to the report. Many of North Carolina's electric cooperative members live in rural areas and many are employed by agribusiness industries. Producing energy from poultry litter or hog waste may not only be a practical energy alternative, but it could also ease the burden on farmers who need to dispose of waste. Presently, however, biomass technologies are expensive, and in some cases unproven as commercial applications. Continued research and pilot projects are being planned to further leverage this resource.

Energy conservation

The NCUC study determined a renewable energy mandate of 5 percent will

cost the state's electric consumers \$750 million, and a mandate of 10 percent over a 10-year period could cost as much as \$2.7 billion to consumers. The La Capra report indicates that the cost of a mandated renewable energy standard could be offset if energy efficiency and conservation were included. Although the report recognizes that there will be initial costs to consumers, it does not address infrastructure costs and user patterns. Consumers may not make necessary changes regarding when to use electricity because it may cause inconvenience or lifestyle problems. However, if incentives and tax relief were offered to consumers, they would be more likely to change their energy-use habits. Because infrastructure costs and user patterns are not mentioned, the report shows that consumers could recover initial costs in a matter of a couple of years. Many believe that this forecast is too optimistic; energy efficiency upgrades could cost thousands of dollars to consum-

ers, and it could take a decade or more for consumers to reap returns on their investments.

North Carolina's electric cooperatives are working with state legislators to develop a comprehensive energy policy including renewable energy resources and energy conservation as part of a balanced and affordable energy supply. Many legislators claim that local renewable energy generation projects could boost economic development in rural areas. The La Capra analysis does consider these aspects of the projects, but further examination of local renewable energy generation projects may reveal pertinent information about the reliability and the return on investment of these types of projects. Many legislators support renewable energy as a matter of environmental policy as well as a method to decrease the nation's dependence on foreign oil. North Carolina's electric cooperatives support that goal but do want the true costs to the local con-

sumer of any legislative mandate to be fully explored and debated as a matter of public policy.

The cooperatives' top priority remains providing reliable energy at an affordable price to members. Additionally, cooperative representatives are actively engaged in discussions regarding energy issues and a renewable mandate. Cooperatives are good environmental stewards and will continue to advocate positions that will not adversely impact the membership. North Carolina's electric cooperatives are looking out for you. As the General Assembly considers proposed bills, the cooperatives are actively educating their members about managing their energy use more efficiently.

For more information on the report to the North Carolina Utilities Commission and related issues, visit www.ncuc.commerce.state.nc.us/rps/rps.htm

Kristie Aldridge is a communication specialist for the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives.

National co-op chief says "get real" about CO₂ emissions



There is a "reality gap" between Congress and the rest of the nation regarding the methods to reduce carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere, says Glenn

English, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. He says the technology does not yet exist to meet the very ambitious CO₂ reduction goals being proposed in Congress.

"We need to reach out to our elected officials, lay out the technological challenges posed by their policy initiatives, and work together to find real-world solutions," English told some 11,000 representatives from the nation's electric cooperatives at their annual meeting in Las Vegas in March.

The Electric Power Research Institute, English said, predicts that developing the new technologies necessary to make meaningful CO₂ reductions will require an invest-

ment of billions in research, and that a recent MIT study concludes that widespread application of such technology is decades away. "Those timeline and investment projections seem at odds with the current congressional mindset," said English.

Addressing the issue of climate change, English said, "We've got to find our footing in the shifting sands of this political debate. We have a very short time to close the reality gap and it's going to take a lot of straight talk to get Congress to recognize that achieving such ambitious goals will be neither easy nor cheap."

English observed that electric cooperatives are ahead of the curve in many respects, pointing out that member-owned co-ops are actively integrating distributed generation into their systems, lead the industry in deploying advanced, energy-saving automatic meter technology and currently distribute about 11 percent renewable power nationwide. "These initiatives coupled with increased efficiency can help keep rates down," he said.

NRECA is the national service organization that represents the nation's more than 900 private, not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, which provide service to 40 million people in 47 states.

Albemarle EMC sees change in leadership



Jeff Edwards



Brad Furr

Jeff Edwards resigned his position as general manager for Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation, based in Hertford, to become general manager for Southside Electric Cooperative, headquartered in Crewe, Va. Southside Electric has more than 51,000 members spread over 19 counties, five towns and the city of Petersburg.

The Albemarle EMC board of directors promoted Brad Furr, Albemarle EMC's manager of technical services, to be Edwards' replacement. L.A. Harris, board president, said the board wanted to promote from within to retain the momentum of several large projects that are under way.

"Brad has deep knowledge of Albemarle EMC's electrical infrastructure and internal management and will make an ideal general manager," Harris said.

Furr has 18 years of experience working with electric cooperatives. He began his career in 1989 working with Union Power Cooperative, based in Monroe, N.C. In 1998, he joined Albemarle EMC as manager of technical services.

Furr has an Associates in Applied Science (AAS) in electronics engineering, plus an AAS and a BS in business administration. He completed the electric cooperative's Management Intern Program and is a National Rural Electric Cooperative Association certified key account executive.

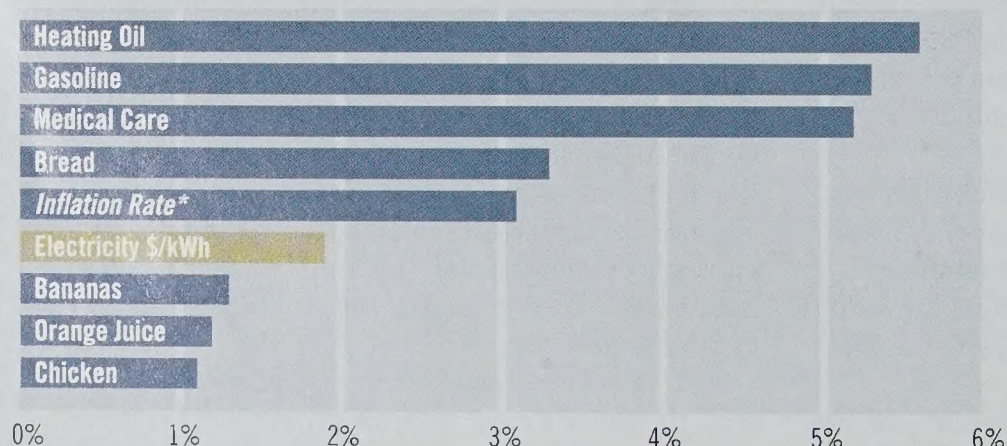
"Jeff and I have worked together for 18 years," Furr said. "It's been a great working relationship, and I look forward to stepping up and taking on some new challenges."

Edwards and Furr began working together at Union, and both came to Albemarle EMC as positions became available. Together, they worked to modernize Albemarle EMC, updating computers and phone systems, implementing digital metering and upgrading the electrical infrastructure.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my nine years here," Edwards said. "We have a great group of employees and directors. Their support is a measure of the success I've had, and I'll miss working with both groups."

Electricity is a good value (1986–2006)

For the consumer, electricity remains a bargain. Below are selected consumer items and their average annual cost increase (adjusted for inflation) over the last 20 years. Even as consumers' reliance on electricity increases, the overall cost has increased less than the rate of inflation.



CPI*—overall Consumer Price Index for the U.S., urban areas
Source: NRECA & Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1986–2006
Annual cost increase—20-year annual compound growth rate

NRECA February 2007

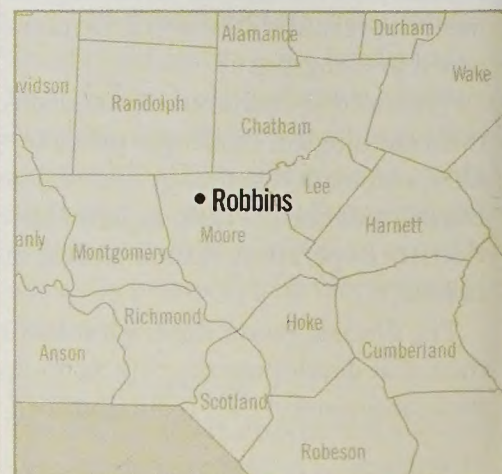
Moore County gets a Growler plant

Randolph Electric Membership Corporation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the town of Robbins teamed up to provide \$472,000 in support of the expansion and relocation of American Growler Inc., from Ocala, Fla., to Robbins.

A \$300,000 grant from the USDA, along with \$60,000 from Randolph EMC, formed an Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund that Randolph EMC will administer. The electric cooperative will loan \$360,000 to Robbins at 0 percent interest for five years to purchase a 50,000 square-foot facility that the town will lease to American Growler. Randolph EMC has acquired an additional USDA loan for \$112,000 to equip and renovate the plant.

"The support for this project from Congressman Howard Coble and his staff was invaluable," said Dale Lambert, executive vice president and general manager of Randolph EMC. "Although REMC does not serve the American Growler manufacturing plant, Randolph EMC has a vested interest in the area. Many of our members, who live and work in the Robbins area of Moore County, will be employed by American Growler."

American Growler expects to provide 40 jobs expanding to 75 by the end of 2008. The company makes off-road vehicles and holds a military contract for the Growler, which will be used as a tactical strike vehicle in conjunction with the Marine's V22 Osprey aircraft.



WHERE IN CAROLINA COUNTRY IS THIS? →



April winner:

The April photo was an aerial shot by Walter O'Neal 3rd, director of technical services with Tideland EMC. It showed the Walter B. Jones Bridge on Hwy. 264 spanning the Intracoastal Waterway between Wilkerson Creek and Pungo River in Hyde County. Maybe because of the aerial angle, many of you thought it was another bridge, including the one between Topsail Island and Sneads Ferry, the Coinjock Bridge, the Oak Island Bridge, Snow's Cut near Carolina Beach, Zeb Vance Norman Bridge over the Roanoke, Monroe Gaskill Bridge near Cedar Island, and the Hobucken bridge. Correct answers were numbered and the \$25 winner chosen at random was Richard Cornell of Scranton, a member of Tideland EMC.

This is a Carolina Country scene in Touchstone Energy territory. If you know where it is, send your answer by May 7 with your name, address, phone number and the name of your electric cooperative.

By e-mail: where@carolinacountry.com

Or by mail: Where in Carolina Country?
P.O. Box 27306
Raleigh, NC 27611

The winner, chosen at random and announced in our June issue, will receive \$25.



Planning for future electricity transmission

Participants in the North Carolina Transmission Planning Collaborative (NCTPC) have achieved a major milestone with the publication of their first single Collaborative Transmission Plan for North Carolina. Participants include Duke Energy Carolinas, Progress Energy Carolinas, North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation and ElectriCities of North Carolina.

The study looks at existing and potential options for electric transmission systems serving the state, including the transmission system's ability to meet load growth projected for 2011 through 2016, and impacts for resource supply options to meet future requirements. The 2006 NCTPC study identified 16 major transmission projects totaling more than \$400 million in capital investment. Major projects are defined as those requiring investments in excess of \$10 million.

The 2006 report can be viewed on the NCTPC Web site at www.nctpc.org/nctpc under the Reference Documents section.

Owners of the transmission system plan to implement the major projects over a 10-year period to preserve system reliability and improve economic transfers. These planned projects are subject to change based on evolving system conditions which is why this is an annual planning process.

"The NCTPC is an excellent example of how the regional planning obligation can be coordinated with existing state planning processes," said Jim Kerr, commissioner on the North Carolina Utilities Commission and president of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC).

The NCTPC was established in May 2005 to provide the participants and other stakeholders an opportunity to participate in the electric transmission planning process for North Carolina, and to develop a single coordinated transmission plan for North Carolina electric utilities that includes reliability and enhanced transmission access considerations. Serious effort is given to appropriately balance costs, benefits and risks associated with the use of transmission and generation resources.

New statewide board officers elected

New officers were elected to the boards of the electric cooperatives' statewide organizations during their annual meetings March 8. The new board officers are:

North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation (power supply cooperative)

President: Buddy G. Creed, South River EMC

Vice President: R. W. "Chip" Leavitt, Jr., Brunswick EMC

Secretary-Treasurer: Jeffrey S. Edwards, Albemarle EMC

NCAEC (statewide services organization)

President: Morris McClellion, Central EMC

Vice President: R. B. Sloan, Jr., EnergyUnited

Secretary-Treasurer: Bob J. Tucker, Haywood EMC

TEMA & TEMA Services (material supply cooperative)

President: L. Calvin Duncan, Brunswick EMC

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A small school makes big news

Bright Ideas grants spark an interest in reading at Cape Hatteras Elementary

By Morgan Lashley

Students at Cape Hatteras Elementary (CHES) in Dare County don't have time to gloat about their school's recent successes. They are too busy reading. In this school year alone, 100 fourth and fifth graders have already completed over 700 novels, and none of them were class assignments.

With the help of two Bright Ideas education grants from Cape Hatteras Electric Cooperative, one of the smallest schools in North Carolina is making big news across the state and the country. The school on the Outer Banks with an enrollment just shy of 300 surged into the spotlight because of unparalleled enthusiasm from faculty, students, parents and the community.

Technology facilitator Diane Brown and art teacher Brenda Smith first received a Bright Ideas grant to purchase "Drawing in One-Point Perspective," a cutting-edge software program that combines art and math, allowing students to view and redesign images from various viewpoints. Brown and Smith have since paired with language arts teacher Molly McKnight to take the program a step further and incorporate a writing component. Using the software, two students view the same photograph from different vantage points and write point-of-view essays on what they saw. The software allows students to improve their writing skills as well as prepare for the state's writing exam.

The second grant, cleverly entitled "Lit With My Librarian," submitted by media coordinator Shauna Leggat, was created to further the school's Literature Circle program, and its success has surpassed expectations.

Leggat used the grant money to fund a countywide reading curriculum she calls "Fiction Diggers!" Originally

designed for fourth and fifth graders, this competitive reading program has proven to be a hit for the whole family. "Fiction Diggers" generated so much interest that Leggat started a similar program for parents called the "Parents of Penzance" in January.

"Fiction Diggers!" is based on the North Carolina Battle of the Books program. With the help of Dare County academically gifted facilitators, media coordinators and faculty at CHES, Leggat compiled a list of current, quality literature. Students then chose teams and began reading from the list. When the reading is complete, they participate in school-wide competitions. The Bright Ideas grant funded the book sets, as well as books on CD and awards for competitions. All five elementary schools in Dare County are involved and conducting their own school-wide competitive reading programs.

These programs, among others, were recognized when the Dare County superintendent of schools Sue Burgess nominated Cape Hatteras Elementary for the International Reading Association's Award for Schoolwide Excellence in Reading. Burgess warned teachers at CHES that receiving this award was a "long shot." But Brown and Leggat fervently began writing, describing how the faculty at CHES met the IRA's 10 goals of literacy, and highlighted the two new programs funded by the Bright Ideas grants. In late January, faculty at CHES was notified that they were finalists for this celebrated award.

The following week, representatives from the International Reading Association visited Cape Hatteras Elementary and were met with the season's first and only snowstorm. Schools in most parts of the county




Cape Hatteras media coordinator Shauna Leggat and school faculty have hooked elementary school students into reading.

were delayed or closed. But the children at Hatteras showed up ready to impress the representatives and show off the programs at their school.

"The day couldn't have gone smoother if it had been scripted," said Leggat of the visit.

When a representative from the IRA jokingly asked the students if the cafeteria staff at CHES supported the school's reading program, fifth grader JB Pittetti replied, "Actually, they do. My mom heads up the cafeteria, and she has read all but two of the titles. At this point, she's ahead of me."

Less than a month later, Cape Hatteras Elementary was informed that they were selected to receive the IRA Award for Exemplary Reading Programs. Administration, faculty, parents and students were ecstatic to be given such a prestigious award. The school was honored in Greensboro at the NCRA State Conference in March, and was granted \$1,000 to send a representative to Toronto, Canada, to attend the annual International Reading Association conference this month. 

Morgan Lashley is graduating in May from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and has worked this year with the Corporate Communications Department at the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives.

Bright Ideas Grant information and applications for 2007-08 are now available online at

www.ncbrightideas.com

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Traveling at the speed of light

The rapid rate of electricity and answers to other electric safety questions

Illustrated by Warren Kessler



In recognition of May as electric safety month, Carolina Country has put together a safety quiz. Take the quiz and see how well you score. It's fun, and it could save your life.

Electric safety quiz

- Electricity travels at the rate of:
A. 120 miles per hour.
B. 5,280 feet per second.
C. 186,300 miles per second.
- Where is the safest place to be during a lightning storm?
A. In a car.
B. In the middle of a field.
C. In a house.
D. Lying face down on the ground.
- The average number of people who die in the United States each year from being struck by lightning is about how many?
A. 10.
B. 100.
C. 1,000.
D. 100,000.
- True or False: Using a telephone during a lightning storm is dangerous.
- If you see a downed power line or low-hanging power line, you should:
A. Move it out of the way and call your local electric cooperative.
B. Stay clear and call the electric cooperative immediately.
C. Don't worry about it because your cooperative already knows about it.
- True or False: Power lines coming from the outdoor pole transformer to your house are covered and OK to touch.
- True or False: It is safe to touch a power line with a pole, as long as the pole is made of plastic.
- How much voltage is needed to hurt or kill people?
A. 120 volts.
B. 240 volts.
C. More than 240 volts.
D. Any voltage.
- If a household fuse blows or a circuit breaker trips, the first thing you should do is:
A. Call your electric cooperative.
B. Determine what caused the fuse to blow or the breaker to trip.
C. Open your breaker box or fuse box.
- In order not to overload your household circuits, you should know the capacity of the circuits. How can you determine the capacity?
A. Look at your electric bill.
B. Check the meter outside your house.
C. Open your breaker box or fuse box.
- If you have a lot of electronic devices and appliances at work in one area of your house, which is the best way to power them?
A. Connect them all to a power strip with a surge suppressor.
B. Have an electrician add wall outlets.
C. Plug in only the one you intend to use.
- What uses more electricity?
A. Leaving a light on all day.
B. Playing Nintendo (video games) for two hours.
- Which takes more electricity?
A. Washing clothes on a warm or hot setting in an automatic washer.
B. Drying clothes on a warm or hot setting in an automatic dryer.
- True or false: You should unplug small appliances when not in use.
- A lamp's or light fixture's recommended bulb wattage means:
A. It's OK to use a bulb of that wattage or lower.
B. It's OK to use a bulb of that wattage or higher.
C. You must use a bulb of that wattage only.

Score	Rating
15 correct	You can work for an electric cooperative.
12-14 correct	You missed the trick questions.
1-13 correct	You learned important information.
0 correct	You chose the wrong answers on purpose.

11. **Answer: B.** Heavy reliance on power strips means you have too few outlets for your purposes. Have additional wall outlets installed where you need them.

12. **Answer: B.** Playing Nintendo for two hours uses more electricity.

13. **Answer: A.** Washing clothes uses more electricity, mainly because you have to heat the water.

14. **Answer: True.** Even if they are not being used, appliances left plugged in do draw a small amount of electric current.

15. **Answer: A.** It's OK to use bulbs equal to or lower than the recommended wattage.

1. **Answer: C.** Electricity travels at the rate of 186,300 miles per second (the speed of light).
2. **Answer: C.** By far the safest place to be during an electrical storm is in a house or building. The metal plumbing and wiring in the walls of the building form a protective barrier. It is important to remember not to be touching that metallic cage. Stay away from electrical appliances, plumbing fixtures, etc.
3. **Answer: B.** About 100 people die each year in the United States as the result of being struck by a lightning bolt.
4. **Answer: True.** Lightning can strike telephone and electrical wires and travel into your house, through your phone cord, into your telephone and into the handset. Cordless phones are not dangerous because there is no physical connection to the wires, but you should not use your cordless phone during an electrical storm to call your neighbor who may not have a cordless phone.
5. **Answer: B.** If you see a downed power line or a low-hanging one, you should stay clear and call your electric cooperative immediately.
6. **Answer: False.** Power lines coming from the transformer to your house are covered but they're NOT OK to touch. Always stay away from power lines.
7. **Answer: False.** It is not safe to touch a power line with any pole. The same goes for an antenna or other object.
8. **Answer: D.** Any voltage can hurt or kill people.
9. **Answer: B.** Determine what caused the fuse to blow or the breaker to trip before replacing or resetting. If you can't find out, call an electrician.
10. **Answer: C.** Your breaker box or fuse box should contain a diagram showing the amp capacity for each circuit. Make sure the combined amp rating of your electrical equipment does not exceed the circuit's capacity. If there is no diagram, contact an electrician.

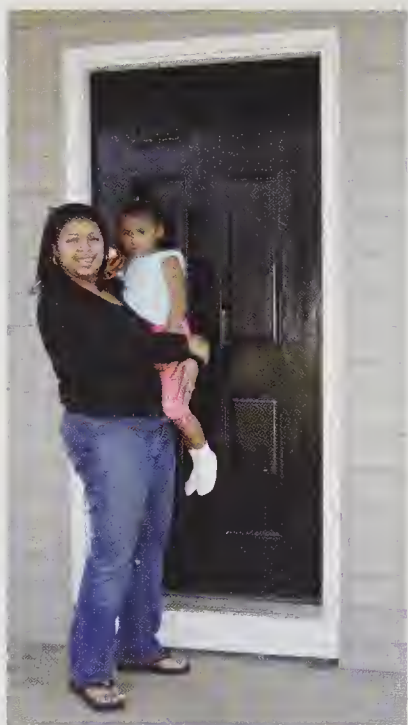
Your cooperative believes it is very important that you know how to be safe around electricity. Just like there's no such thing as being too safe, there's also no such thing as too much information about electrical safety. We hope you enjoyed the quiz and learned something, too.

How did you do?

Affordable Housing With Heart



By Hannah Miller



Sonia Henley and her daughter, Jamyia, 4, enter their home in Poole Place One in Cornelius. Photo, Hannah Miller

The first thing Sonia Henley did when she and her family moved into an Our Towns Habitat for Humanity house in Cornelius was repaint the interior.

It is the first home this single mother has ever owned, and she wanted to get away from apartment-living decor. "I got so tired of white walls," she says. As soon as she and the construction volunteers of WomenBuild, a Habitat group, signed

off on the three-bedroom home last May, she and her three children moved in and she grabbed her paintbrush.

Now her living room is a tasteful beige, but that's not all, says Henley, 41, a Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools bus driver. When Christine Boone, Our Towns' development director, walked in recently, Henley asked her what she saw that was different. "Look up," she commanded.

Boone looked up, but didn't immediately take in the white crown molding that set off the beige. Sonia's cousin had recently put it up. Now, she's going to set her cousin to work on a rock border in the front yard. "I told him that's the next thing I wanted done."

Henley shares her delight in her new home with her three children: Jamyia, 4, Dyance, 16, and Iesha, 20. Asked what he likes best about the new home, Dyance answers immediately: "Space."

But room to stretch out in and the freedom to paint as they please are not the only things the family has gained. The house is located in Poole Place One, an Our Towns Habitat development of 15 one-story homes in Cornelius, where home energy is provided by the EnergyUnited electric cooperative. The Henley family has a home that, over the years, should mean big savings in electricity and gas.

The volunteer Our Towns Habitat for Humanity teams up with Advanced Energy to build affordable housing efficiently and compassionately

The mortgage package includes the Energy Star-rated range and refrigerator that Whirlpool, a national partner of Habitat, donates to each new Habitat home nationwide. The EPA estimates that Energy Star appliances use 10 to 50 percent less energy than standard models.

Sonia Henley's gas hot water heater is the tankless, on-demand kind, which EPA estimates will save a homeowner \$1,800 over minimum-standard heaters during its 20-year life. "You don't have to wait for the hot water to heat up anymore," she says.

Building efficient habitats

Volunteers built heat and air-conditioning conservation into Henley's home from the ground up, following SystemVision-approved construction methods. SystemVision is an affordable-homes program of the North Carolina-based nonprofit Advanced Energy, which is supported by North Carolina's electric cooperatives.

Building to conserve energy is not difficult, says Tiffani Irvin, Our Towns land development and construction director. "It's not expensive. It's mostly an investment of time. There's very little money involved . . . but it insures the homeowner will be able to live in and operate the house."

"That where it all begins, the framing," says Phil Taylor, one of three site supervisors on Our Towns' small paid staff. The volunteer crews, including the prospective homeowner, put the studs in to accommodate extensive insulation. Sonia says, "I did everything. Put the walls up. We did the drywall."

There's also "lots of caulk," Taylor says, at sheathing joints, around electrical outlets in Sheetrock, around windows and ductwork. Heat and air conditioning units are sized to the house.

The result? In what Taylor calls "a door blower test," when the house is filled with air to see how much leaks out, "our houses usually exceed standard by 200 to 300 points."

To Sonia Henley and her kids, that means their average monthly gas heat and electric air conditioning bill shouldn't go over \$21, figured annually, says Brian Coble, director of Advanced Energy's affordable housing sector.

SystemVision sets construction guidelines and inspects homes during construction—three times, says Taylor—

before accepting them as SystemVision and Energy Star homes. It's so confident of its techniques that it tells homeowners it will reimburse them on HVAC bills that run over their estimate, and if the bills are consistently high, it will revisit and fix the problem with the house. Advanced Energy has never had to revisit an Our Towns Habitat home, says Coble. He jokes that volunteers "build them right because they don't know how to build them wrong."

More habitats for humanity

With more than 1,000 volunteers a year hammering away on Saturdays and sometimes weekdays, Our Towns has built 126 homes since it was formed in 1988. They're in Huntersville, Cornelius, Davidson and Mooresville. Eighteen went up last year.

They hope to start 46-home Poole Place Two in Cornelius later this year. Like Poole Place One, it will be Energy Star and SystemVision approved, and will be served by EnergyUnited.

These homes, and all others that Our Towns builds in the future, will not only be energy efficient, but will follow "green" building practices like saving on-site trees and using recycled materials. They'll also be built with the wide hallways and doorways and other accommodations to aging that characterize the "universal design" concept. Our Towns' builders hope that, like a house they built in Mooresville last year, these homes will earn the N.C. HealthyBuilt Homes designation.

"Our Towns Habitat has a great program in place. I think in general they're going above and beyond what the standard market is doing," says Advanced Energy's Coble.

"Volunteers are never in short supply for us, which is a blessing," says construction director Irvin. Volunteers not only build the homes (valued at \$60,500), they raise much of the money for materials. Subgroups include WomenBuild, Interfaith Build, Business Build, Youth United, churches, neighborhoods, Davidson College students, and even the DECA Club of North Mecklenburg High School, now building a home in memory of Jessica Readling, a classmate killed in an accident.

With each home they raise money for, volunteers also raise an additional 10 percent per home to help Habitats in Guatemala and Sri Lanka. Our Towns in 2005 was named 13th among the 1,700 U.S. Habitats in such tithing over the long term.

Sonia Henley's interest-free mortgage payment, like those of all homeowners, goes into a revolving fund to help build more homes. It's only \$373 a month, and compared to the more than \$500 she was paying in apartment rent, "it's easy to pay this," she says.

But there's no way to put a price on the freedom home ownership brings her. Now, when she paints, or landscapes, or even remodels, "I don't have to ask the landlord," she says. She's thinking of replacing the sink in one of her two baths with a pedestal model. People tease her, she says. They say "How long you been here? You want to knock out stuff?"

"I like having property," she says with satisfaction. 

Hannah Miller is a writer/photographer in Charlotte.



Top to bottom:

This three-bedroom, two-bath Habitat home in Cornelius is the first to be owned by Sonia Henley, a Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools bus driver.

A woman's place is . . . on the roof. These three women volunteers for Our Towns Habitat work on a home in Poole Place One in Cornelius.

Volunteers cheerfully bent to the task when Our Towns Habitat built 15-home Poole Place One in Cornelius last year. It's served by EnergyUnited.

All Photos, Our Towns Habitat

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Home remodeling can be a

sunny experience

Energy prices continue to climb, but the good news is that barriers to using green energy are dropping. Technology continues to evolve that helps us channel the sun's energy. Here are green energy ideas from the National Association of the Remodeling Industry if you plan to remodel:

Conservation Options

Draft-proof your home and upgrade insulation for optimum conservation. A remodeling project is a prime opportunity to undertake wall and ceiling insulation, air sealing, and installing new energy efficient windows with low-e glass, gas fill and insulating spacers. You can maximize cooling with roof overhangs that block direct sunlight.

Passive Solar Heating

Passive solar is the most cost effective approach to maximizing solar energy for your home. Passive solar heating occurs when sunlight passes through a window, and no additional equipment is used to harness the energy. Passive solar applications use building elements such as walls, windows, floors and roofs, in addition to exterior building elements. Landscaping can control overheating by providing shade and winter windbreaks. Once heat is collected inside, a well-insulated airtight "building envelope" helps prevent heat loss.

Active Solar Systems

Active solar systems use solar collectors and a pump or a fan to distribute the sun's energy. Active systems are often used for heating water. The collector is a dark color to absorb the sun's energy and convert it into heat. Some collectors have a glass cover, collecting solar energy all year. Domestic hot water requirements can be met in part by active solar systems. In most cases solar energy will provide some partial water requirements during winter, but most of the summer season requirements. In most applications the solar system is used to preheat water going into a conventional water heater. Outdoor swimming pools can be entirely heated by solar systems, eliminating the need for a supplemental heater.

Photovoltaics (Solar Electricity)

Sunlight converted directly to electricity through solar cells is called photovoltaic (PV) energy. Solar cells come in many sizes and will produce electricity as long as sunlight




shines on them. Solar cells used for electrical generation are a more sophisticated version of the solar cells used in calculators and other small devices. PV cells generate direct current (DC). DC appliances and lights can be used in recreational vehicles. To use standard household appliances the power must be converted to alternating current (AC), so a solar electric system must be designed to convert the power to AC.

Although prices have dropped in recent years, a PV system can still be expensive. They are especially cost effective in remote areas away from power grids where you might need to generate your own electricity, or in recreational vehicles and boats. An electrical load analysis must be done, and there are important safety considerations. Consult your electric cooperative.

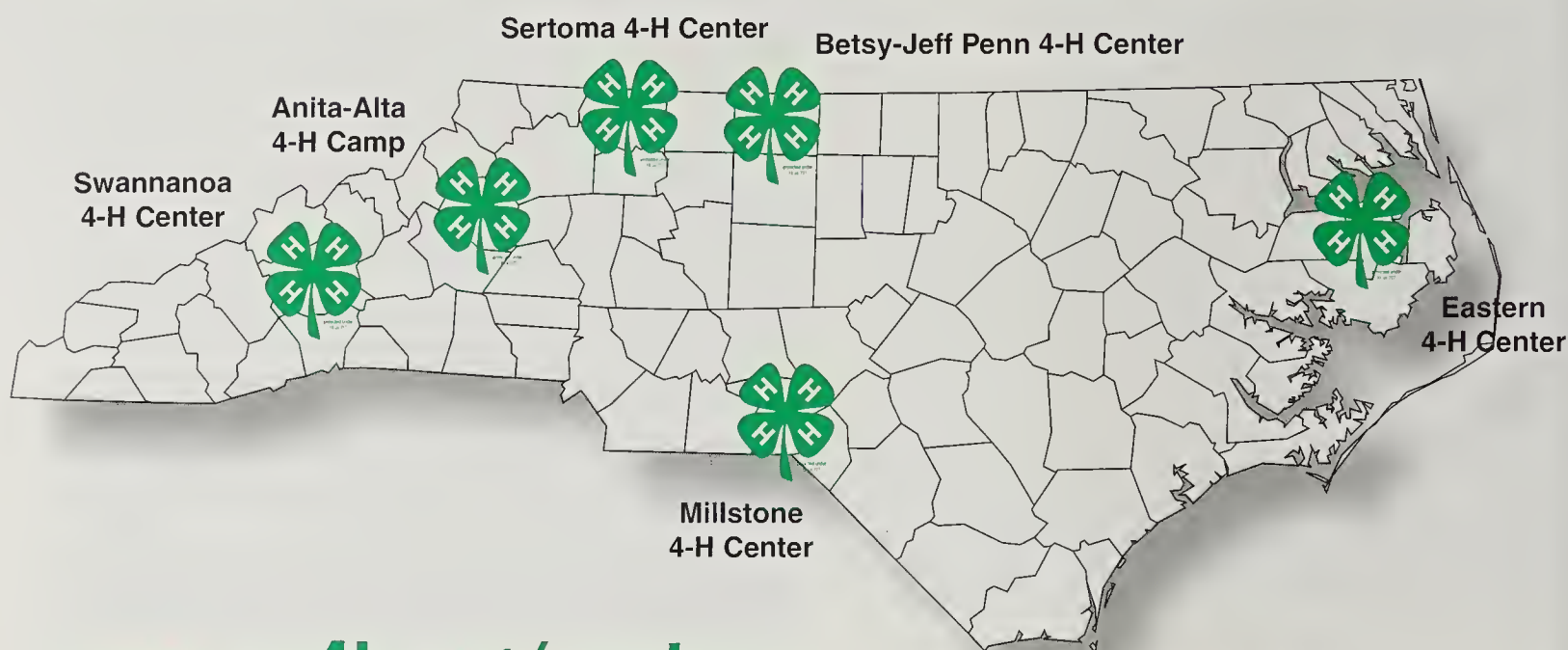
Geothermal Energy

Geothermal or ground source heat pumps take stored solar energy from the soil and bodies of water. They rely on electricity but provide the equivalent of three times the kilowatt heat for every kilowatt delivered. Heat pumps are reversible, supplying cooling and heating, so they can be useful in areas with significant cooling loads.

Remodeling brochure

You can get a free brochure from the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) on "How to Select a Remodeling Professional." Call (800) 611-NARI or visit www.RemodelToday.com and click on the homeowner's guide. 

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Remodeling an unfinished basement

The unfinished basement is often a cluttered maze of Christmas decorations, tool boxes and fishing tackle. But as kids enter their teenage years or retirement invites new hobbies, many homeowners begin viewing the basement as an opportunity to expand their living space.

A popular home improvement project, basement remodeling costs approximately one-third less than adding onto a house and is considered a good investment prior to selling a home, according to Gary Larkin, founder of Larkin Construction in Columbia, Mo. But as with any major home improvement project, you must establish a firm vision and budget, as well as familiarize yourself with building codes and design options to ensure success.

"Remodeling costs start around \$35 per square foot, but making changes to materials or design during the construction process can increase costs," said Larkin, whose business has served mid-Missouri since 1985.

Empty the rooms to properly survey the space. This will help determine what kind of rooms to design—a new office, extra bedrooms or even a recreation room. Installing windows for bedroom escape routes or constructing a wet bar to complete a second kitchen



Plans should cover lighting and flooring.

can add to construction costs. Telling contractors exactly what you want, as well as giving them a wish list of added features, enables them to provide a more precise calculation of the budget and time constraints.

It helps if spouses talk their plan out before meeting with the contractor. "You would be surprised at how many couples come in thinking they agree, but really don't," said Larkin.

Seek out an honest contractor who understands your wishes. Meet with a handful of contractors in person to receive on-site bids and compile a list of contractor references and insurance information. Also, call your local homebuilders association to see if the business is a good-standing member.

The Web site, www.contractors.com, warns homeowners from signing a contract with businesses that use scare tactics, such as "today-only discount." The Web site also urges you to beware of contractors who request pay for the entire job up front or in cash. Contractors should also never ask you to sign a completion certificate for any reason before the job is finished.

Water leakage, mold, insulation, and lighting are all issues that need to be addressed. Contractors should fix any leaks or mold problems in the base-

ment before construction. Brownish stains beneath the basement sub floor indicate water leakage. An active leak exists if the stains are spongy.

To transform a cold, cement basement floor, carpet is usually the most economical option. Carpet also reduces noise that bounces off harder flooring surfaces. Pergo is the next most economical choice, Larkin said, but tile is more popular lately. Heated floors are a possibility, but they can be expensive.

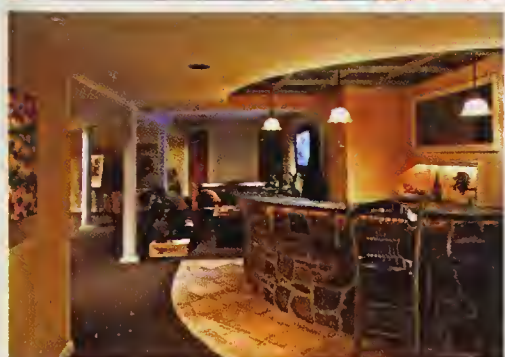
Warming a typically dark, gloomy basement with light is often a goal. Installing windows or enlarging existing ones are ideal options. However, the addition of a window can tack on a few thousand dollars to the budget.

Artificial lighting choices include fluorescent lights, table lights and floor lamps. Ceiling panel fluorescent lights are typically the most economical, but often remind homeowners of overhead office lighting. Ask contractors about ways to mix inexpensive fluorescent lighting with softer lighting options.

Remodeling quiz

Homeowners can take a free online survey to help define their goals. Visit www.larkinconstruction.com/remodeling.

—Katherine Heine



Media rooms are popular remodeling choices.

When you don't have much green, you can still refresh a room



Money is no object when wealthy homeowners and corporate moguls get a yen to spruce up their spaces. But for most folks, the budget dictates the scope of makeover plans. Here are ideas, according to cost, to get a fresh, updated look without breaking the bank.

\$0—Dematerialize

Eventually, the vase that was so irresistible five years ago or the throw pillows that were so stylish a few seasons past, lose appeal, becoming, well, clutter. Spruce up by packing up items that have lost their luster. The process provides a chance to start with a fresh canvas, and it costs absolutely nothing. If you are undecided about throwing or giving items away, pack and store them for while.

\$25—Accessorize

This amount could net a few accessories at a resale shop or discount department store. Scour resale shops, antique markets and yard sales for items that fit into your mini-makeover plan.

\$50—Get painting

This sum is just enough to cover supplies to add a splash of paint to create a focus wall in a foyer or cover an entire small space such as a powder room.

Painting a room is perhaps the best place to start when updating a room. A standard size family room can get a fresh, do-it-yourself coat of quality paint for about \$100, including brushes, rollers, and accessories.

Check out paint departments at home centers for mis-tinted, unclaimed or returned paints at discounted prices.

\$100—Get more paint

That's about what it costs, designers say, to cover a room with good quality paint. Bear in mind, however, that at this price, it's a do-it-yourself project. Hiring a professional painter will send the cost skyward.

\$500—Do it all in moderation

Paint a room and purchase a few new accessories such as flower arrangements, accent pillows, candles and holders, lamps or even some artwork with this budget.

More than \$500—Think bigger

You can invest in a new piece of furniture, reupholster a favorite chair or small sofa or brighten up a room with new overhead light fixtures.

Resources for ideas

Makeover inspiration is everywhere. The key is to sift through the mountain of ideas to find ones that are just right for your project. Here are ideas:

- Bring home a few home décor books and magazines and thumb through them, scouring each photo for whatever catches the eye. Note wall coverings, window treatments, wall moldings, furniture arrangement and accessories, and the way stylists use color and textures. Pay attention to the turn-offs, too. Knowing what you don't like can be as important as knowing what you do.
- Take advantage of the best that interior design professionals have to offer by taking Design Showcase House Tours. Private home and garden tours are another source of inspiration.
- Home furnishing stores are a treasure trove of ideas. Peruse areas that feature the most appealing style, whether traditional, contemporary, or colonial. Find a sales associate and ask why items are grouped together to achieve a specific, or themed, look.

Finally, dream big. Find the most expensive store that offers that sought-after look, then set out to emulate it with less expensive pieces. **B**

—Patrice D. Bucciarelli

Mini-makeover projects

There may be no place like it, but that doesn't mean even the most beloved home can't benefit from change. While do-it-yourselfers can invest thousands of dollars in improvements, small changes can create big new looks, even on the tightest budgets.

One of the best ways to change a room? Begin with a can and a plan.

Grab a paintbrush

"Painting a room is good place to start," says interior designer Rita Harrison, of Rita Harrison Interiors in Corbin, Ky. "It's an inexpensive way to get a new look started."

According to Tom Strunk, a representative for Sherwin-Williams Paint, a standard size family room can get a fresh coat of paint for about \$100, including brushes, rollers and accessories. Choose high-quality paint that will stand up to years' worth of cleaning.

"The first thing to look for is durability, then texture," Strunk advises. "Flat paint is the best product to cover a surface that may have imperfections, although with low-quality flat paint you will lose washability. If wall imperfections are not an issue, choose a satin paint for a quality finish and more cleanability."

Painting a focal wall in an entryway or elsewhere with a darker shade of

the main color or with a complementary color can lend drama to an overall scheme. Textures and faux finishes applied prudently under dining room chair rails or in small spaces, such as a powder room, can create a sophisticated look.

"Just remember less is more," Harrison says. "Too much texturing or faux finishing will make the room look busy."

Add trim and decorative molding

Putting trim at wall bases and adding decorative crown molding near ceilings will update any room. "In the past, trim at floor bases and around doors was narrow," Harrison says. "The new look calls for wider trim at bases and around doors, and decorative molding at ceilings." You can increase the width of wood trim by adding stained or painted-to-match extender caps.

Increasingly, though, homeowners are turning to urethane decorative products to add distinctive touches to dining rooms, family rooms, living rooms, bedrooms, and beyond. The material is designed to stand up to humid conditions in kitchens, baths, and laundry areas. Like wood, urethane molding accepts paint well and lends itself to faux finishes.

Urethane molding is also pocket-friendly. Costs for trim and molding range between \$2 to \$14 per linear foot. If you spend between \$4 and \$5 per linear foot, adding molding to an average size 12-foot-by-12-foot room could cost as little as \$200.

Updating Doors

In fact, many home mini-makeovers include replacing mundane or dated interior doors with stylish ones. Changing out a nondescript door



Eye-catching urethane ceiling medallions can be painted or stained to match your decor.

with a hollow paneled is popular, and hollow panel doors reportedly cost an average of less than \$100 installed. Changing hardware on an existing door is another option. More homeowners are replacing round doorknobs with lever handles for comfort and style reasons.

Mini Kitchen Upgrade

Aside from bathrooms, kitchens seem to be the spaces homeowners are most likely to make over. Kitchen cabinetry is a good place to start a mini-makeover on a budget. You can revive tired cabinets with a fresh coat of durable, high-quality paint. Then follow with a glaze to accent the cabinet design. If you have the budget for it, consider replacing countertops.

There is a wide array of cabinet hardware pulls and handles available to freshen older cabinets. Prices range from just cents to several dollars.

—Patrice D. Bucciarelli



New cabinetry and updated appliances refresh a kitchen's look.

Creating an outdoor cooking area



During spring and summer days, many homeowners spend hours cooking outdoors and socializing and with friends and family, and homeowners are remodeling their outdoor living areas like never before.

Members of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) consider the trend to be on the upswing, noting that homeowners are more often requesting multi-level decks, spas, fireplaces and outdoor kitchens in their backyards.

From wood fire pizza ovens to cabinets and countertops, outdoor kitchens are no longer just for the well-to-do. Increasingly, products that remodelers would normally use for indoor kitchen remodels are now being designed for outdoor use, including range hoods and fans to keep cooking heat and smoke away from your guests.

"Homeowners today entertain in their homes a great deal," said NARI president Everett Collier. "Outdoor kitchens can be added to patios, decks, under a gazebo and in courtyards."


Appliance options for backyards include grill islands designed for socializing.

First, make a basic lifestyle checklist:

- How do you currently use your indoor kitchen? How would you like to use your outdoor kitchen?
- On average, how many cooks use the kitchen at one time? If you have more than one cook in the family, you may want to consider dual work zones.
- Do you enjoy cooking or will the area be more a gathering place?
- If it is a gathering spot, is there room for family or friends who are not involved in the meal preparation? Is that space convenient and comfortable for everyone?
- Is the lighting in the area sufficient for evening entertaining?
- Will your family use the area for regular dining or will this be primarily an entertainment spot?
- How many people on average would you need to seat? Do you have enough room for all of them?

Customizable grill islands, much like indoor kitchen islands, can be found in more elaborate outdoor kitchens, along with dishwashers and refrigerators that are designed to be used outdoors. Patio heaters make it possible to entertain outside when the weather is chilly.

You also have more options than ever when it comes to outdoor lighting, including sophisticated outdoor lamps and intricately designed, but inexpensive, hanging lights. Accessories available to decorate their outdoor kitchens range from durable easy-to-care-for furniture, sculptures and fountains to décor items like attractive pots for plants and paintings specially designed for use outdoors.

Before finalizing the design of an outdoor space, make sure the remodeling contractor checks zoning laws so that the outdoor space will be the proper distance from property lines. The contractor should also obtain the necessary permits for the job. 



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Sun, wind and vegetable oil

This is a picture of some of my husband's many energy saving projects.

We use the sun and wind. Our whole house is hooked up.

We have changed all light bulbs in the house to compact fluorescents. Maurice even has all appliances set up where he can turn them off at the switch at night and when we are not at home.

If there is a lot of wind he wants me to wash extra clothes and run the dishwasher. He says, "Let's not waste this free energy." Our children call him the "Energy Detective."

Let's not forget the road. We have two hybrid vehicles, and now he is working on turning used vegetable oil into biodiesel fuel.

*Teresa Manning
Liberty / Tideland EMC*



Thanks for sending us stories about souvenirs. See more on our

Web site. Next month we'll publish your favorite summer camp stories. (Deadline was April 15.) For more themes and rules of our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series, go to page 27.

The road trips

Our daddy was a truck driver, our mother was a cotton mill worker, and there were three girls and two boys in our family. We lived in Durham.

After lunch on Sundays our daddy, who had been driving all week, would say, "Everybody in the car. We're going on a trip."

How we loved to hear those words! Off we would go in our 1927 Chrysler touring car—all five of the children in the back seat. Daddy would tell us our destination. He would point out road marks. We played games and sang songs. Those road trips were precious to us, a great time of family togetherness.

Our trip was about 1½ hours long. There wasn't any wear and tear on the tires, and no gas or oil were used. No mileage was added to the odometer. My daddy never put his foot on the gas pedal or the brakes. The car never left the driveway.

The love we shared during those road trips was not imaginary as our trip was. We children didn't realize we were saving energy, we were just having fun.

*John Waller, Told to Deanna R. Yearwood
Durham / Blue Ridge Electric*

Insulate ceiling openings

A simple, inexpensive insulation box placed over attic stairs, ceiling access entries and whole-house fan installations will save energy consumption. Most of these areas are under insulated or not insulated at all. It is equivalent to leaving a window open all year.

Building an insulation box is a simple do-it-yourself type project that will pay for itself quickly. Make a box with 4-by-8 rigid insulation board, duct tape and batt insulation on the inside of the box. Tape all joints inside and out for strength. Place the finished box three inches over the edge of the opening it covers on all sides.

*Michael Allen
Indian Trail / Union Power Cooperative*



Rationing gasoline

During World War II gasoline was scarce, plus you had to have stamps issued by the government to be able to purchase it. If you used your stamps

before the next booklet was issued, you rode the bus, the trolley or stayed home.

My parents' family lived in Waynesboro, Va., and we lived in Baltimore, Md., so our visits had to be very carefully planned by my father.

My father's way of saving fuel was to post me in the back window of the car, looking for police, as he put the car in neutral and drifted down each hill to save gasoline. The speed limit was only 35 mph at that time, and I wasn't a very good lookout. A policeman sneaked right behind my father and he got a ticket. That ended my career as a lookout.

*Ona Deane
High Point / EnergyUnited*

Bathroom fan timers

In order to conserve energy in my house, we installed timer switches for our exhaust fans in our bathrooms. The timers conserve in two different ways. First and most obvious, this 10-minute interval timer automatically shuts off the fan based on which setting you press. In the past I have left the house in the morning or gone to sleep at night with that 120-volt, 0.700-amp fan running for up to eight hours unattended. With this switch, the maximum is one hour.

The second function helps with water conservation, especially in the summer months. You can set the timer to help guide the length of your morning shower. Sometimes on a chilly morning, a 45-minute warm shower is not uncommon. I can now set the timer to 10 or 20 minutes, save a few gallons of water, and also make sure I'm not late for work!

*LaSheree Howell
Concord / Union Power Cooperative*

Remembering the fish

Growing up, I used to watch "Sesame Street" on TV. I remember, in one episode, a little boy left the water running in his bathroom sink after he had finished brushing his teeth. Then the phone rang. The boy answered, and he realized it was an aggravated fish calling from a nearby lake who complained that the boy was wasting energy and water. The moral: don't waste resources and energy, and do your part to conserve.

This story stuck with me. When I shower, brush my teeth, wash my hands or face, I remember to regulate the amount of water that I use. I don't let the water run while I'm lathering my hands or face with soap, I don't let the water run while I brush my teeth, and I don't take long showers.

Every one of us needs to save where we can. And I'm scared to get a phone call from an angry fish complaining that I'm drying up his lake.

*Sara Odell
Butler High School / Matthews*

Use only what you need

Eat less. You won't have to cook or buy as much. Don't go shopping so often. That would save energy by trucks hauling less, farmers consuming less fuel to plant, care for and harvest food. If you eat less, you won't have to work out at the gym as much.

Use only what you really need. You'll see a huge trickle-down effect which really adds up. Lower the temperature on your water heater a little. Turn your heat down a couple or so degrees cooler in winter and the air conditioning up a couple of degrees. Close the drapes on the sunny side in summer, open in winter. Plant deciduous trees in select locations around your home.

Walk whenever possible. Park a little farther away. Combine more trips and share shopping trips with a friend.

Do manual labor in your garden. Use a hoe and save the tiller. Posthole diggers work wonders. Use your old newspapers and paper bags to cover the ground around your plants. That saves digging weeds and also the fuel to run an irrigation pump. Put out some rain barrels to use for some of your watering.

*Nancy Stanley
Roaring River / Surry-Yadkin*

Little things add up

Being on a fixed income of \$623 per month, saving energy is important to me. But it's not easy with kids. I always say, "Close the door! Cut the light out!"

I've made sure that air flow is blocked from coming into my home. I've placed strips and caulk around windows and doors to keep cold air out and heat inside. I've also insulated under my home.

I make sure electric things like iron, lamps, etc., are cut off or unplugged when we're not using them. I wash and dry clothes at night, make sure I have a full load, and put up a clothes line to dry clothes (and I clean the lint vent each time I use the dryer). These things really help save energy.

*Vereda Bowen
Riegelwood / Four County EMC*

Tried and true

In the 1940s, we bathed in a pan of water warmed on top of the wood heater in the living room. We took turns. We heated blankets beside the heater with flat irons on top.

At bedtime, we wrapped in a warm blanket and jumped into a cold featherbed mattress, where were laden down with heavy homemade quilts. The warm blanket heated the quilts and the feathered mattress. Mom wrapped an iron in a towel and placed it at our feet under the quilts.

Later we had electricity, an oil circulator and a window fan. The fan was placed in a central window and turned so it drew air out of the house. All inside doors were opened. In each room one window was raised just a few inches. The fan then would draw a breeze through each room.

And we walked everywhere. 🚶

*Carolyn Fox
Washington / Tideland EMC*

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Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures about these themes. If yours is chosen for publication, we'll send you \$50. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

July 2007 Before Farmers Markets
Your stories of buying and selling farm products in the old days. *Deadline: May 15*

August 2007 The Class Prank
What's the best one you ever heard?
Deadline: June 15

September 2007
My Favorite Fair Photo
From a North Carolina fair or festival. Tell us when and where. *Deadline: July 15*

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. One entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos must be 300 dpi and actual size.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay \$50 for each submission published. We retain reprint rights.
8. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions. (Let us know if you don't agree to this.)
9. Send to: Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616
Or by e-mail: finer@carolinacountry.com
Or through the Web: www.carolinacountry.com

What to expect from a home inspection

By Rodney Phillips

Anyone in the market for a home—new or previously owned—will benefit by hiring a home inspector. Complex heating and cooling, electrical or low voltage systems may require additional specialists for individual inspection.

Why have your own inspector for a new home? Doesn't the local building authority inspect all new homes? In most cases there are local code enforcement inspectors tasked with inspecting new construction or remodeling projects at intervals during the construction process. Typically the work is first inspected at the time of grading, excavation and foundation preparation prior to pouring concrete for footings and foundation. After all framing and masonry is in place and all plumbing, mechanical and electrical systems are roughed in, these phases are inspected by specialists. The building inspector returns for another inspection before interior walls and ceilings are covered. The fourth round of inspection comes after all trades have completed their work and the appropriate inspectors return for a final inspection of all components.

It sounds bulletproof but there are gaps in the armor. First, few people are more overworked than government building inspectors. The housing boom has boosted their workload to the point that time for each inspection is limited. Second, government employed building inspectors are inspecting for safety and livability issues related to the building code. It's not their job to insure your preferences are satisfied. So long as there are no code violations, their signature goes on the card. Additionally, although approved plans are required on site, there may be no comparison made by the inspector between the plans and the actual work completed. Point being, you may not be getting what you think! You'll be well served if an experienced home inspector is on hand to look over your shoulder to ensure all is like you want it to be.

Partnering with a qualified home inspector of your own choosing is also critical when considering a previously owned home. Conditions may exist from original construction that could cause problems; un-permitted or improperly done work during the life of the house may not be obvious or disclosed; damage and deterioration may have occurred in areas not readily accessible during a sales walk through; and code changes may have rendered some elements of the home obsolete.

Your real estate agency will offer to provide an inspector on your behalf. Whether you elect to use their nominee or select your own inspector, homework is required to be sure your inspector is up to the task.

At present, anyone who wants to call himself or herself a home inspector can print up some cards, hang out a sign and go to it. They may have never studied the building codes, may have no certification from the organizations responsible for developing the codes and may have no



Evidence of rot at porch may point to more serious problems.


insurance to protect you from their possible errors.

Ask for proof of liability and "errors and omissions" insurance. Ask to see a current certificate from the authorizing body (look for the "CABO," "ICC" or "SBCCI" initials designating one of the recognized code organizations) documenting that the inspector has passed all required tests and has complied with the continuing education requirements. Find out if your prospective home inspector is a member of a professional association such as North Carolina Licensed Home Inspectors Association (www.nclhia.com)

Ask, also, to see a sample copy of the inspection report form your inspector uses. A comprehensive report may include an item-by-item checklist organized by area or room-by-room. Site, landscaping, drainage issues and tree safety concerns should be included. Determine how the roof inspection is to be conducted and how the mechanical, plumbing and electrical systems are to be inspected. Be sure any special concerns or questions you may have are added to the basic form. Try to be on site during the inspection. Your inspector will provide a detailed report—text and photos—but being on site demonstrates your level of interest and allows the inspector to explain deficiencies as circumstances allow.

Your report also should include a summary of primary concerns exposed by the inspection and an evaluation of how critical those issues are to safety, livability and suitability of the home. This gives you documentation for negotiating with the seller for repairs or price adjustments.

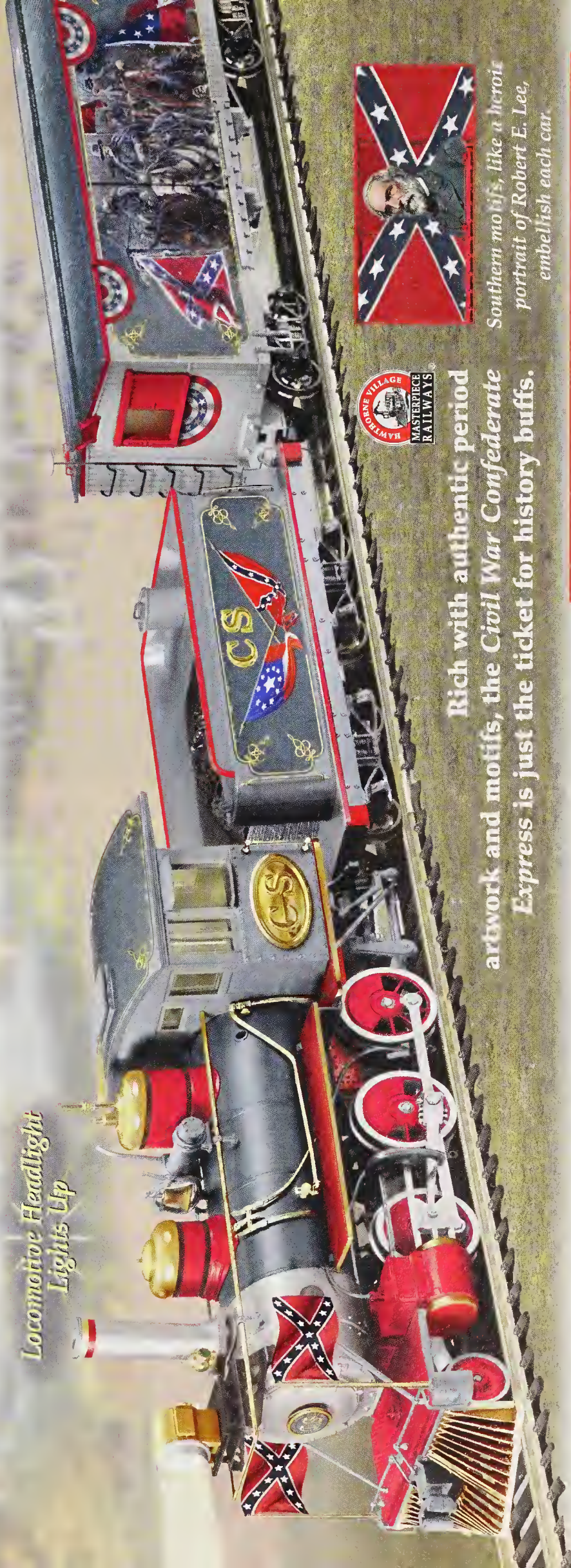
Even a skilled and experienced home inspector can't inspect what cannot be seen. Some parts of the structure may not be accessible or temperature may interfere with optimum testing of the heating or cooling system. All such un-inspected areas should be explained in the report.

How much should a home inspection cost? A proper home inspection will take several hours. A final quote may only be possible after an initial walk through. Do not expect to spend less than \$300 to \$400 for a full inspection. Compared to the cost of unexpected repairs, however, this is money well spent. 

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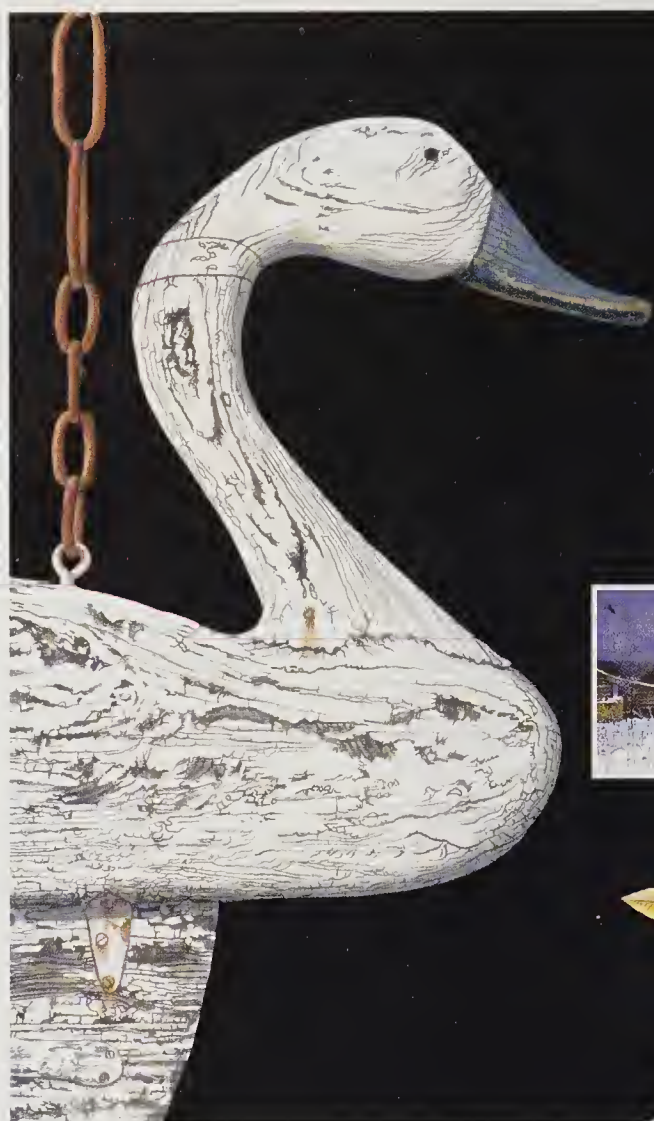
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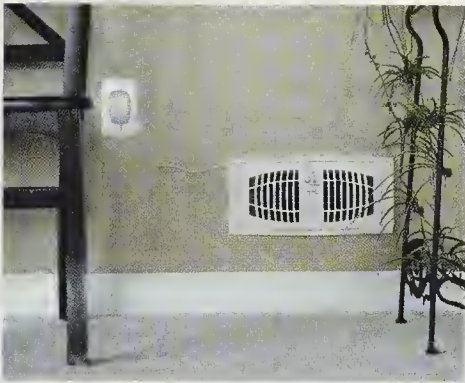
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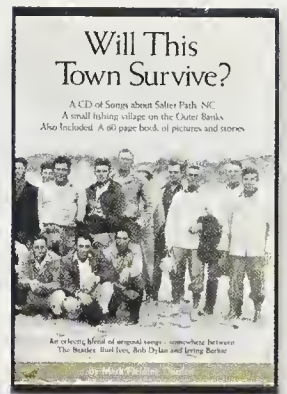


"Songs and Stories of Salter Path"

Salter Path, a coastal community near Morehead City, got its name from a path that crossed from the sea to the sound where fish were carried for processing. As the story goes, the path passed by Riley Salter's house—hence, "Salter Path." "Will This Town Survive? Songs and Stories of Salter Path" is based on real people and events. Musicians and singers from Salter Path perform the CD's 13 songs. Lyrics detail old life there, with titles such as "I Want to Go Feeshin'" and "Homer's Point." Musician Mark Fielding Darden, who wrote, engineered, and produced all but one song, explains the lyrics' history in a companion, brochure-style book. For example, "Homer's Point" is about an early fish house on the shore and a popular point of land built up over time from discarded fish shells. The companion piece is 59 pages and includes vintage photographs collected by Vicky Lewis. "Will This Town Survive? Songs and Stories of Salter Path" sells as a set for \$20.

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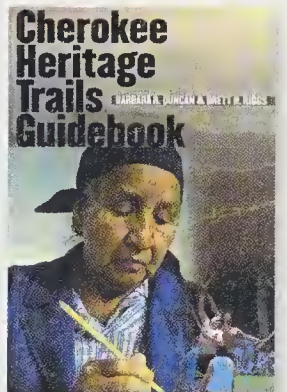


"Cherokee Heritage Trails"

This comprehensive guidebook journeys into the homeland of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in the mountains of North Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia. Travelers are invited to look beyond easily visible aspects to find a deeper Cherokee heritage rooted in sacred places, community ties, storytelling and folk arts. Organized around seven geographical communities or hubs, each chapter covers sites, side trips, scenic drives and events. Featured sites include The Museum of the Cherokee Indian, Junaluska Memorial and Museum, and Unicoi Turnpike Trail, part of the historic Trail of Tears. Events covered include Mountain Heritage Day and a Cherokee fall fair. Writers Barbara R. Duncan and Brett H. Riggs enrich the text with Cherokee stories, history, poems and philosophy. Cherokee Heritage Trails Guidebook is published by the University of North Carolina Press. Softcover, 368 pages, \$16.95.

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Grendeddy Dave's BBQ Sauce

The Merritt brothers of Wake Forest are taking their Grendeddy Dave's BBQ sauce across the South, "one state at a time." Scott, Aaron and Jeff Merritt describe the flavor as a cross between eastern North Carolina's barbecue's vinegar-based sauce and western North Carolina's tomato-based sauce. Made from a secret family recipe, the sauce is named after their father, Dave Merritt. Winner of the 2005 North Carolina Pork Council "Taste of Elegance" competition, the sauce is finding its way into Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia. Grendeddy Dave's sauce is made with all natural ingredients and no added preservatives or fat. It's available from Dave's Smokeshack Foods for \$25 per gallon, \$6 for a 20-ounce bottle or in custom baskets, and can be shipped by the bottle or the case.



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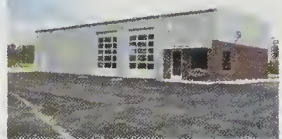
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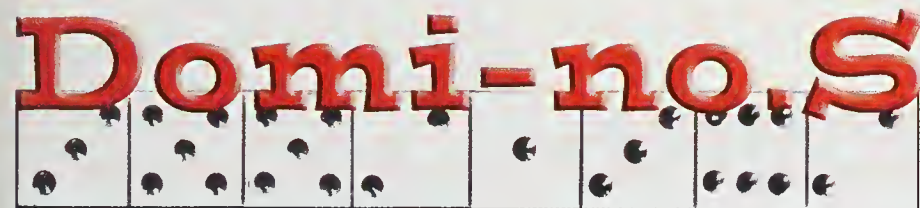
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X R					X R							
B	I	R	D	⁶ S	of a	F	E	A	T	H	E	R

Each letter in these multiplication problems stands for a digit. Repeated letters stand for repeated digits. Letter values are the same in both problems. Given S=6, can you replace the missing digits? All ten digits are used, and each letter is repeated at least once.

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—cgj

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Do you find that raather strange?

-cgj

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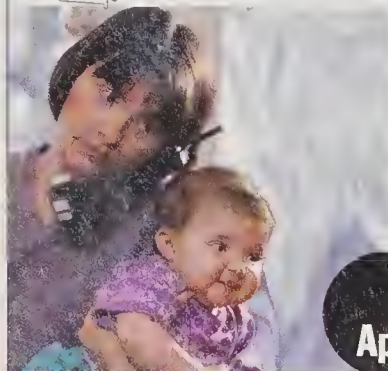
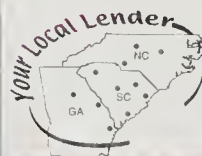
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\$200,000	\$1,104.41	5 YR ARM	5.25***	5.39%
\$200,000	\$666.50	Power Arm	1.25***	6.52%

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May Events



On May 26 in Linville, join the Grandfather Naturalists on a Grandfather Mountain Backcountry Excursion—a three-hour hike to MacRae Peak via the Grandfather Trail. The hike begins at 10 a.m. and costs \$16, which includes park admission. Please call for reservations: (828) 733-4326. Visit www.grandfather.com to learn more.

Thermal City Miners

May 25–28, Union Mills
(828) 286-3016
www.huntforgold.com

Canoe Trip

May 26, Rosman
(828) 877-3106
www.headwatersoutfitters.com/special_events

Backcountry Excursion

May 26, Linville
(828) 733-4326
www.grandfather.com

NC Symphony

May 26, Rutherfordton
(919) 733-2750
www.ncsymphony.org

Corvette Show

May 26–27, Maggie Valley
(828) 926-0201
www.smokyevents.com

Garden Jubilee Festival

May 26–27, Hendersonville
(828) 693-9708
www.historichendersonville.org

MOUNTAINS

Street Dances

Mondays, Hendersonville
(800) 828-4244
www.historichendersonville.org

Music on Main Street

Fridays, Hendersonville
(800) 828-4244
www.historichendersonville.org

"Smoke on the Mountain Homecoming"

May 2–20, Flat Rock
(828) 693-0731
www.flatrockplayhouse.org

"Naked Beauty"

Contemporary Dance
May 3, 4 & 5, Asheville
(828) 254-2621
www.acdt.org

Canoe Trip at Dusk

May 4, 11 & 25, Rosman
(828) 877-3106
www.headwatersoutfitters.com/discovery_trip

Golden Jubilee

May 5, Shelby
(864) 201-2464

Tour of Homes

May 5, Lenoir
(828) 758-4004

Spring Festival

May 5, Murphy
(828) 837-6821
www.chokeecountychamber.com

MayFest

May 5, Rutherfordton
(828) 287-2071
www.rutherfordtown.com

Wildflower Walk

May 5, Linville
(828) 733-4326
www.grandfather.com

The Nylons Concert

May 11, Spindale
(828) 286-9990
www.foundationshows.org

Art Hop

May 11–12, Spindale
(828) 286-3636
www.rcvag.com

Lake Eden Arts Festival

May 11–13, Black Mountain
(828) 686-8742
www.lakeedenartsfestival.org

"Guys and Dolls"

May 11–13, Rutherford
(828) 245-2734
www.rutherfordcommunitytheatre.org

Oldies Show

May 12, Matthews
(704) 545-6618

Butterfly Festival

May 12, Hudson
(828) 728-8272

Bird Walk

May 12, Linville
(828) 733-4326
www.grandfather.com

"Harvey"

May 18–20 & 25–27, Hayesville
(828) 389-8632
www.licklogplayers.org

Lake Norman Festival

May 19, Mooresville
(704) 664-3898
www.mooresvillenc.org

Naturalist Weekend

May 19–20, Linville
(828) 733-4326
www.grandfather.com

"Taking a Chance on Love"

May 23–June 9, Flat Rock
(828) 693-0731
www.flatrockplayhouse.org

Quilt Symposium

May 24–27, Mars Hill
(828) 884-7330
www.WesternNCQuilters.org

Fiddlers & Bluegrass Festival

May 25–27, Union Grove
(828) 478-3735
www.fiddlersgrove.com

PIEDMONT

History Corner:

A Fashionable Past

May 2, Raleigh
(919) 807-7943
www.ncmuseumofhistory.org

Fort Bragg Fair

May 3–20, Fayetteville
(910) 396-9126
www.fortbraggmwr.com

Mayberry Farm Fest

May 4–5, Mount Airy
(336) 401-1350

"Marx in SoHo"

May 4–6, Fayetteville
(910) 678-7186
www.gilberttheater.com

Multicultural Festival

May 5, Lexington
(336) 248-3960
www.lexington.net

Antiques Street Fair

May 5, Cameron
(910) 245-1185
www.antiquesofcameron.com

Marionettes Show

May 5, Fayetteville
(910) 678-7186
www.gilberttheater.com

Plant Sale

May 5, Lexington
(336) 731-1427

Cinco De Mayo 10K

May 5, Fayetteville
(910) 960-0994
www.cincodemayo10k.org

Free Day at Cape Fear Botanical Garden

May 5, Fayetteville
(910) 486-0221
www.capefearbg.org

Bluegrass & Barbecue

May 5, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

Rites of Spring Festivities

May 5, Charlotte
(704) 568-1774
www.charlottesmuseum.org

Multicultural Festival

May 5, Lexington
(336) 248-3960
www.lexingtonnc.net

Live Silhouette Drawings

May 5, High Point
(336) 885-1859
www.highpointmuseum.org

Farmer's Market

May 5 Through Oct. 27,
Wake Forest
(919) 556-1579
www.wakeforestmarket.org

Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver Bluegrass

May 10-12, Denton
(336) 859-2755
www.dentonbluegrass.com

Antique Tractor & Truck Pull

May 11-12, Oakboro
(704) 485-4906
www.hinsoauction.com

Car Show

May 12, Efland
(919) 387-0024
www.timelesscruizers.com

Ribbon Rose Workshop

May 12, Raleigh
(919) 807-7900
www.ncmuseumofhistory.org

Folk Arts Festival

May 12, St. Pauls
(910) 865-3890
www.ncfolkartsfest.org

Beach Blast

May 12, Albemarle
(704) 984-9415

Pottery & Craft Sale

May 12, Charlotte
(704) 335-0325
www.historicrosedale.org

Gold Mining

May 12-13, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

Festival & Pow Wow

May 18-20, Maxton
(910) 844-3352
www.tuscaroras.com

Lake Donna Party

May 19, Youngsville
(919) 556-4026

Wine Festival

May 19, Elkin
(336) 526-1111
www.yadkinvalley.org

Spring Bazaar

May 19, Fort Bragg
(910) 960-2145
www.geocities.com/popebazaar

Garden Tour

May 19-20, Statesville
(704) 878-3429
www.ci.statesville.nc.us

Spring Garden Tour

May 19-20, Hillsborough
(919) 732-7741
www.historichillsborough.org

Spring Garden Tour

May 19-20, Winston-Salem
(336) 733-8053

Museum Annual Meeting

May 22, High Point
(336) 885-1859
www.highpointmuseum.org

Comedian James Gregory

May 26, Winston-Salem
(336) 721-1945
www.ncarts.edu/stevens_center

CAROLINA COUNTRY adventures



Outdoor drama "Strike at the Wind" is set to run July 7 through Aug. 18.

Robeson County

Lumbee River EMC territory

Red Springs
Pembroke • Lumberton
• Rowland

The largest North Carolina county, Robeson is home to the Tuscarora and Lumbee tribes. The county's streams, swamps and artesian wells provided an excellent supply of water and food for early native Americans and later for Scottish Highlands Anglos who settled here. Opportunities in Robeson to learn about Indian culture abound. Pembroke hosts "Strike at the Wind," the outdoor drama about a 17-year-old renegade who fought for Indian and African American rights. Shops that sell local Indian crafts include Eaglefeather Arts in Pembroke and Lumbee Creations in Lumberton, a city touted for its many hotels, restaurants and accessible location just off I-95. For history buffs, free attractions include Border Belt Farmers Museum in Fairmont and the Train Depot in Rowland, offering railroad history and original office equipment. Locals enjoy eating at TarPackers in Saint Pauls and Sheff's Seafood & Company in Pembroke. Festive events in May include the Tuscarora Festival & Pow Wow in Maxton and the family-friendly MAFSAC air show in Lumberton. Lumbee Homecoming is set for July.

Three top spots:

Museum of the Native American Resource Center: The museum at UNC-Pembroke features artifacts, arts and historical records. Collections include videotaped recollections of Native American men and women. (910) 521-6282 or www.uncp.edu/nativemuseum

Southeastern Farmers Market: This large venue in Lumberton has fresh produce and fun food events. Off-season, visitors can purchase food, crafts and other items at the market plaza. May events include the Lumbee Spring Pow Wow and Crawfish Day. (910) 618-5699 or www.ncagr.com/markets/facilit/farmark/lumberton

Flora Macdonald Gardens: These peaceful gardens in Red Springs range about 10 acres, with meandering paths and pretty azaleas. The grounds, once part of historic Flora Macdonald College, are also the site of the annual Highland Games. Free garden admission. (910) 843-5000 or www.capefearscots.com/games.html

Learn of other nearby adventures and events:

(800) 359-6971
www.lumberton-nc.com

Taste of Durham
May 26, Durham
(919) 572-6551
www.tasteofdurham.org

Memorial Activities
May 26–28, Fayetteville
(910) 432-3443
www.bragg.mil/18abn/museums.htm

Glory Days
May 28, Fayetteville
(910) 222-3382
www.fayettevillealliance.com

Memorial Day Ceremony
May 28, Hope Mills
(910) 425-3775

Blueberry Fest
June 2, Ammon
(910) 588-4592
www.elizabethtownwhitelake.com

COAST

Vietnam Veterans Wall Exhibit
May 3–6, Warsaw
(910) 296-1475

Antique Farm Days
May 4–5, Goldsboro
(919) 735-5503

Wooden Boat Show
Through May 5, Beaufort
(919) 807-7385
www.ncculture.com

Fantail Film Festival
May 4, 11, 18, 25, Wilmington
(910) 251-5797

150th Birthday Grand Finale
May 5, Albemarle
(704) 984-9415

Music in the Park
May 5, Engelhard
(252) 926-8461

Herb Sale
May 5, Washington
(252) 975-6206

Jazz on George
May 5, Goldsboro
(919) 735-4959
www.dgdc.org

May Play Day
May 5, Edenton
(252) 221-4875
www.visitedenton.co

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www.roanokeisland.com

Carolina Piano Trio
May 11, Oriental
(252) 249-2736

Bath Fest & Open House
May 12, Bath
(252) 923-3971
www.bath.nchistoricsites.org

Croquet Tournament
May 12, Bath
(252) 923-3971
www.bath.nchistoricsites.org

Wings Over Wayne Air Show
May 12, Goldsboro
(919) 722-0027
www.wingsoverwaynearshow.com

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Wondertales**
May 12, Manteo
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

**"Bloody Mary
& The Virgin Queen"**
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Roanoke Island
(252) 473-1061
www.roanokeisland.com

Country Roads Bike Tour
May 18–19, Scotland Neck
(252) 826-3152
www.townofscotlandneck.com

Seafood Festival
May 19, Engelhard
(252) 925-3719
www.engelhardseafoodfestival.com

**Swindell's Old-Time
Store, Lecture**
May 19, Bath
(252) 923-3971
www.bath.nchistoricsites.org

Spring Sprint
May 19, Elizabeth City
(252) 267-4573
www.active.com

Quilt Show
May 19–20, Morehead City
(252) 354-5880

Carla & Redemption Ministries
May 26, Maxton
(910) 844-6336

Fossil Festival
May 26, Aurora
(252) 322-4405
www.aurorarichlandchamber.com

**Veteran's Healing
Field of Honor**
May 26, Wilmington
(910) 791-1557

New River Banks Party
May 27, Jacksonville
(910) 577-6353

Memorial Day Observance
May 28, Wilmington
(910) 251-5797

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History—1905–1955"**
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www.wheelsthroughtime.com

"Make It New" Art Exhibit
Through July 1, Asheville
(828) 253-3227
www.ashevilleart.org

**Professional Baseball
Clubs Exhibit**
Through Aug. 31,
Kings Mountain
(704) 739-1019

PIEDMONT

**"Solving the
Rock House Mysteries"**
Ongoing, Charlotte
(704) 568-1774
www.charlottenmuseum.org

Charlotte Flag Journey
Ongoing, Charlotte
(704) 568-1774
www.charlottenmuseum.org

Discovering Contemporary Art
Through May 7, Fayetteville
(910) 485-5311
www.fayettevillemuseumart.org

**Wisconsin's Flying Trees,
WWII Gliders**
Through July 1, Fayetteville
(910) 483-3003
www.asomf.org

Temples and Tombs
Through July 8, Raleigh
(919) 664-6795
www.ncartmuseum.org

Granville Talent on Parade
Through August, Oxford
(919) 693-9706

**Brooklyn to Biddleville
Neighborhoods**
Through Nov. 10, Charlotte
(704) 568-1774
www.charlottenmuseum.org

**"Buffalo Nation:
Plains Indian Cultures"**
Through Dec. 31, Gastonia
(704) 866-6923
www.schielemuseum.org

Contemporary Art
Through May 7, Fayetteville
(910) 485-5311
www.fayettevillemuseumart.org

**Tom Hunter:
Contemporary Narratives**
Through July 8, Charlotte
(704) 337-2019
www.mintmuseum.org

**Faith And Community
Action Exhibit**
Through Aug. 5, High Point
(336) 883-3022
www.highpointmuseum.org

**"Surviving the Great
Depression"**
Through Aug. 25, Charlotte
(704) 568-1774
www.charlottenmuseum.org

"Call to Duty"
Through April 2008, Fort Bragg
(910) 432-3443
www.bragg.army.mil/18abn/museums.htm

COAST

Senior Arts Exhibit
May 4–30, Edenton
(252) 482-3400
www.visitedenton.com

**Mollie Fearing
Memorial Art Show**
May 7–29, Roanoke Island
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

Listing Information

Deadlines:
For July: May 25
For August: June 25

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Sunflowers Forever

A while back, I picked up a mystery plant from one of the tables at a plant swap. I plopped it in the ground and almost forgot about it. Over the summer it grew to nearly 5 feet with no sign of budding, but the stout, sinewy stem and narrow, willowy leaves were attractive. At autumn's end, the plant erupted with a profusion of gorgeous yellow flowers—about 2 inches wide with a brown center like black-eyed Susans. I finally located the plant in Peter Loewer's "Tough Plants for Tough Places": the willow-leaved sunflower, *Helianthus salicifolius*. It is among several native perennial sunflowers that are, as Loewer puts it, "akin to many American originals: tough, rugged and like the American skyscraper, tall and bold." The North Carolina Botanical Garden has selected a cousin of the willow-leaved sunflower, the swamp sunflower (*H. angustifolius*), as the 2007 Wildflower of the Year, calling it "the giant exclamation point at the end of the growing season." In exchange for postage, the Botanical Garden will send you free seeds to punctuate your own late summer garden. As its name suggests, swamp sunflower lives in the wild in swamps, marshes and savannas, but it will thrive in wet to average soil in gardens. Give it plenty of room in full sun at the back of the border or in meadow plantings. Mature plants can exceed 6 feet tall by 4 feet wide, but you can prune the plant back by half in June without sacrificing any floral display. Otherwise, you might try the dwarf varieties 'First Light' (4 feet tall) or 'Low Down' (about 1 foot tall). To order a free packet of swamp sunflower seeds with planting instructions, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to 2007 NCWFOY, North Carolina Botanical Garden, CB 3375 Totten Center, UNC-CH, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3375.

Set the Table for Beneficial Insects

Lacewings, ladybugs, praying mantises, parasitic wasps and other beneficial insects are all the rage among gardeners who want to curb pests while cutting pesticide use. People often buy and release beneficial insects in the hopes they'll remain and feast on aphids, mealybugs, whiteflies and other unwelcome garden visitors. But beneficial insects also supplement their nutritional needs with nectar and pollen. By planting some of their preferred flowering plants, you'll provide a balanced diet that'll invite beneficial insects to stick around and produce generations of offspring. (You'll also need to avoid broad-spectrum pesticides.) Plants in the carrot family, including dill, fennel and parsley, are very attractive to many beneficial insects. Other favorites include coriander, angelica, cilantro, lovage



People often buy and release beneficial insects, such as ladybugs, in the hopes they'll remain and feast on aphids, mealybugs, whiteflies and other unwelcome garden visitors.

and sweet cicely. While some beneficial insects are highly recognizable, their young may not be. Immature ladybugs, for example, look nothing like their parents—they are small, black and wingless, often described as looking like little alligators. It's important to recognize and not destroy the larvae, which have particularly voracious appetites, or eggs of beneficial insects. For some identification photos and other helpful information about beneficial insects, visit N.C. State University's Biological Control Information Center Web site, <http://cipm.ncsu.edu/ent/biocontrol>.

Safe Gardening

- ▶ Mosquitoes are more than just pesky—they can carry disease. Do garden chores when mosquitoes are less active. Cover up with lightweight clothing when outdoors. The Centers for Disease Control recommends applying repellent, noting that products containing DEET or Picaridin were most effective in scientific studies. Oil of lemon eucalyptus, a plant-based repellent, has also been shown to provide protection similar to repellents with low concentrations of DEET. For more information, go to www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/insect_repellent.htm
- ▶ Tetanus bacteria lurk in garden soil—all it takes is a cut, scrape or splinter to invite infection. It's easy to avoid this potentially deadly disease: Make sure you are vaccinated at least every 10 years. 📌



Carla Burgess can be reached at ncgardenshare@mindspring.com.

For more gardening advice, go to the "Carolina Gardens" section of www.carolinacountry.com.

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Front-loaders use less water, rinse clothes better

Front-loader clothes washers are the most efficient design for washers. They use about half as much water and detergent as a top-loader washer.

However, they are less convenient to load and unload. I use one at my own home and it's easy to drop clean clothes on the floor when unloading it. If you have a bad back, unloading heavy wet clothes can be a problem.

There is a new design of top-loading washer, by Whirlpool and Sears, which is almost as efficient as a front-loader. Instead of using a large rotating agitator, it uses a wobbling washer plate and small agitator in the tub to move clothes through the soapy water. This design does not require the entire tub to fill with water and has a relatively fast spin speed for a top-loader design.

This new top-loader design has a very large capacity, up to 4.5 cubic feet of clothes. By doing fewer loads each wash day, less electricity is used overall to operate the motors in the washer and less hot water is consumed. The only drawback is, being a top-loader, the dryer cannot be stacked on top of the washer to save floor space.

Another top-loader option is a hybrid top/front-loader by Staber. It has a horizontal axis so it spins like a front-loader, but it loads from the top instead of the front. It is bit pricey, with costs ranging from about \$1,200 to \$1,700.

If you do not mind bending over and you want the most efficient and best cleaning washer, a front-loader is difficult to beat. With the tub on a horizontal axis, the tub has to be only partly filled and the clothes naturally tumble through the soapy water. Fins inside of the tub also catch some water and shower it down over the tumbling clothes.

One advantage of a front-loader is you can stack the dryer on top of the washer to save space. This, along with high energy efficiency, is why they are extremely popular in Europe's typically smaller homes. If you already have a dryer, it will likely fit on top of front-loader models.

Another advantage of the horizontal axis tub in a front-loader is the tub can spin at a much higher speed, up to 1,600 rpm, during the rinse cycle. This forces more soapy water out of the clothes during each cycle. The fabrics in clothes last longer when there is less residual detergent in them. Also, more thorough rinsing is a plus for people with sensitive skin or allergies.


Just as tumbling the clothes cleans them better, it also rinses out the soap more effectively when the fresh rinse water comes into the tub. You can select the number of rinses (up to five) with the final high-speed spin cycle to remove the most water and soap residue. This also



This efficient Duet front-loading clothes washer by Whirlpool saves space with the dryer mounted on top of it.

reduces the time required in the dryer so even more energy is saved.

As with most appliances today, front-loading clothes washers are becoming smarter and more automatic. Instead of you setting the water level dial depending upon the load, the washer automatically senses the weight of the clothes and selects the most effective settings. These also have manual overrides if you prefer a particular setting.

Another option is a combination front-loading washer/dryer. These have a smaller capacity than wash-only models. By using a condensing dryer design, these models do not have to be vented outdoors, so they can be placed anywhere near a faucet and drain. 

The following companies offer efficient washing machines:

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Scrum-delicious Burgers

- 1½ pounds ground beef
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped onion
- ½ teaspoon garlic salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded cheddar cheese
- ⅓ cup canned sliced mushrooms
- 6 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 6 hamburger buns, split
- Lettuce leaves and tomato slices, optional

In a medium bowl, combine beef, onion, garlic salt and pepper; mix well. Shape into six patties, ¾-inch thick.

In a small bowl, combine the cheese, mushrooms, bacon and mayonnaise; refrigerate.

Grill burgers, covered, over medium heat for 5–7 minutes on each side.

During the last 3 minutes, spoon ¼ cup of the cheese mixture onto each burger. Serve on buns with lettuce and tomato if desired.

Yield: 6 servings



Make-ahead Lemon Bombe

- 1 package (16 ounces) angel food cake mix
- 2 envelopes unflavored gelatin
- ¼ cup cold water
- 1 cup boiling water
- 1 can (12 ounces) frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed
- Sugar substitute equivalent to 1 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- ¼ teaspoon grated lemon peel
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- 3 cartons (8 ounces each) frozen reduced-fat whipped topping, thawed, divided
- ½ cup flaked coconut, toasted
- Mint leaves, maraschino cherries and lemon and orange slices, optional

Prepare and bake cake according to package directions, using an ungreased 10-inch tube pan. Cut cooled cake into 1½-inch cubes. Set aside.

In a bowl, sprinkle gelatin over cold water; let stand for 1 minute. Add boiling water; stir until gelatin is dissolved. Add the orange juice concentrate, sugar substitute, lemon juice, lemon peel and salt; mix well. Refrigerate for 30 minutes or until partially set. Fold in 2 cartons of whipped topping.

Line a 5½-quart bowl with two overlapping pieces of plastic wrap, letting plastic wrap hang over edge of bowl. In another large bowl, gently combine the cake cubes and whipped topping mixture. Spoon into prepared bowl, gently pushing against side to prevent holes. Cover and refrigerate for at least 24 hours.

Just before serving, uncover bombe. Invert onto a cake plate. Remove bowl and plastic wrap. Frost with remaining carton of whipped topping; sprinkle with coconut. Garnish with mint, cherries, and lemon and orange slices if desired.

Yield: 14 servings

Winning reader recipe

Spaghetti Salad

- 1 small box of thin spaghetti
- 1 (16 ounce) bottle of Italian dressing
- 1 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 2 cucumbers, cut into small pieces
- 1 tomato, cut into small pieces
- 1 green pepper, cut into small pieces
- 1 onion, cut into small pieces

Cook spaghetti and drain. Mix remaining ingredients and toss with spaghetti noodles. Refrigerate.

Tina Johnson, a member of Blue Ridge EMC, will receive \$25 for submitting this recipe.

Send Us Your Recipes

Contributors whose recipes are published will receive \$25. We retain reprint rights for all submissions. Include your name, address, phone number (if we have questions), and the name of your electric cooperative. Mail to: Carolina Country Kitchen, P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611 or E-mail to: Jenny.Lloyd@carolinacountry.com



Kathy's Herbed Corn

- ½ cup butter, softened
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh chives
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 7 ears sweet corn, husked

In a small bowl, combine first six ingredients. Spread 1 tablespoon over each ear of corn. Wrap corn individually in heavy-duty foil. Grill covered, over medium heat for 10–15 minutes, turning frequently, or until tender.

Yield: 8 servings

Recipes are by Taste of Home magazine. For a sample copy, send \$2 to Taste of Home, Suite 4321, PO Box 990, Greendale WI 53129-0990. Visit the Web page at www.tasteofhome.com



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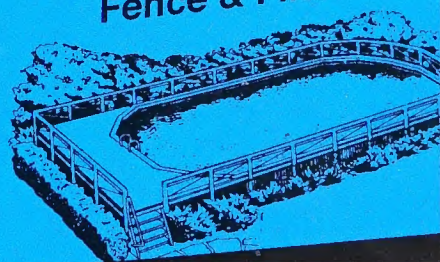
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* Does not include \$36 policy fee, minimums may apply

Sample Monthly Rates per 1,000*

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5	N/A	N/A
15	N/A	N/A
35	\$ 1.79	\$ 1.49
55	\$ 4.30	\$ 3.55
65	\$ 7.18	\$ 5.41
75	\$ 13.24	\$ 8.85
85	\$ 26.26	\$ 17.67

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